



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
January 30, 2025 at 3:05 PM

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 865 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 865 relating to Agriculture that appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources' Kona Cooperative Extension.

In research produced by CTAHR faculty published in 2014, The Economics of Coffee Production in Hawai'i, EI-25, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. (Woodill et al., 2014), it was found that there were 516 coffee producers generating under \$10,000 annually on an average farm size of 1.67 acres; 327 farms generating \$10-250,000 in sales on an average of 5.76 acres; and just 9 farms generating \$250K-1 million on an average farm of 108.56. And there were two farms generating over a million dollars in sales annually. These producers generated significantly different profits at different scales. CTAHR Applied Research and Cooperative Extension serves all coffee producers and other orchard crop producers and farmers with education, innovation and outreach required to support their success. Our aim is to increase producer's economic viability at all scales.

This administrative, professional, and technical (APT) position will contribute to the applied research and Cooperative Extension efforts based at the Kona Agriculture and Extension Office. The APT support is an important addition to our work as it helps extend capacity of our faculty to work on issue identification, educational program development, and engagement with our agricultural producers.

We also respectfully offer the following amendments to SECTION 1, page 1 lines 3 -4; and page 3, lines 8-9; and SECTION 2., lines 19-20; to correct the name of the college to university of Hawaii at Manoa college of tropical agriculture and human [resources] resilience (CTAHR). The renaming of the college was approved in October 2024 to better align CTAHR's name to its land-grant mission of improving the human condition

and human use of natural resources through research, education and Cooperative Extension.

We support SB 865 with the suggested amendments, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.



LATE

P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

January 30, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON SB 865
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
3:05 PM

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 865, which appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Kona Cooperative Extension.

The excellent work performed by UH CTAHR for Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers cannot be overstated. The ongoing outreach and education are unparalleled in the State. Farmers and ranchers rely on this program for their success. CTAHR has helped develop and improve agricultural technologies pertinent to Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers. This includes intensive cover crop research, promoting the importance of locally grown produce, developing biological and cultural methods for controlling pests without chemicals, and the use of biological nitrogen fixation to significantly increase the production of high protein foods while at the same time reducing the need for commercially produced fertilizers.

An Educational Support Associate will provide support to CTAHR's Kona Extension Faculty who provide support for farmers and ranchers that produce coffee, macadamia nut, avocado, and other tropical fruits, and livestock, as well as assisting with coffee leaf rust and coffee berry borer, two-lined spittlebug, tree pruning, grafting, propagation, organic and conventional pesticides, and nematode management.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important subject.



LATE

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Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB865.**

The allocation of funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources' Kona Cooperative Extension is a critical step forward for the advancement of Hawaii's agricultural sector. This initiative is essential for providing much-needed support to our local farmers, who rely on expert guidance and the latest agricultural research to sustain and grow their operations. By investing in a dedicated Educational Support Associate, we can ensure the dissemination of vital information and innovative practices that will enhance the productivity and sustainability of our farms.

Furthermore, the establishment of this position will play a pivotal role in strengthening community engagement and educational outreach programs. The Cooperative Extension serves as a bridge between cutting-edge research and practical application, and this new role will amplify its impact by assisting with workshops, field days, and other educational initiatives. This direct support will empower farmers with the knowledge and tools necessary to tackle challenges such as pest management, soil health, and climate adaptation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union



IN SUPPORT OF SB865

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

UH; CTAHR; Position; Establishment; Kona Cooperative Extension; Appropriations (\$)

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council (SHAC) stands in support of this Bill. Our consortium represents 1,500 agribusinesses, from growers to processors and shippers, stretching across the State. SHAC coordinates research and marketing grants on behalf of 100% Hawaiian origin products, including coffee, papaya, floriculture and macadamia nuts.

Our current single Orchard Extension staff is not adequate when considering the \$130 million valuation of the crops they cover. Coffee, macadamias and orchard crops could all sustain their own Extension agent, yet all crops are combined into one staff position. Additional staff are desperately needed so that growers can maintain access to vital information. A Support Associate will greatly benefit growers and their crop's health.

Thank you for considering this bill. Your attention makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of farmers.

Mahalo nui loa for supporting this bill!

Suzanne Shriner
Administrator



**THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA**

**THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025**

**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, January 30, 2025 3:00 PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

RE: SB 865 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 350 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

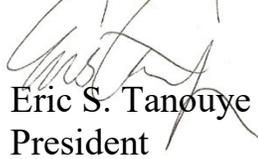
The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 865**

We support the funding of one permanent, full-time Educational Support Associate (APT) position within UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension that will help to serve the agriculture community.

If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 22, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.



Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,



Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:14:35 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Love	Testifying for hawaii tropical fruit growers	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For a number of years the small staff of 3 agents at UH KAinaliu has been doing the job of what more than 8 agents did in the 60s. It is essenmtial this critical position be filled in order to assist farmers across the state with important crops like coffee.

SB-865

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Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

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Ken Love	Testifying for hawaii tropical fruit growers	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For a number of years the small staff of 3 agents at UH KAinaliu has been doing the job of what more than 8 agents did in the 60s. It is essenmtial this critical position be filled in order to assist farmers across the state with important crops like coffee.

Covfefe Coffee Farm
PO Box 336
Pahala, HI 96777
206.799.1679

January 28, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

As a coffee producer in the Ka'u region of Hawai'i, we strongly support this bill. With the current challenges facing the coffee industry today, such as Coffee Leaf Rust, Coffee Berry Borer, and other diseases and pests, we need the support of researchers and scientists more than ever.

This bill represents a vital step toward safeguarding the future of Hawai'i's coffee industry by ensuring the resources needed to combat these threats. We urge the Legislature to prioritize its passage to protect our farms, livelihoods, and communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Alla Kostenko
Farm Manager
Covfefe Coffee Farm

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:09:32 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miles Mayne	Testifying for Kau Coffee Growers Cooperative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We, the Kau Coffee Growers Cooperative, are writing to advocate for the funding of SB865 for a full-time extension associate at the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) dedicated to the coffee and orchard crops industries in Hawaii. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Hawaii is home to **1,111 coffee farms** covering a total acreage of **9,422 acres**. Coffee has consistently ranked among the top five commodities in the state and is currently ranked **3rd**.

Despite the significant presence and economic importance of coffee farming in Hawaii, the resources dedicated to this industry are disproportionately low compared to other agricultural sectors. Currently, there is only **one extension agent** assigned to the coffee industry, while floriculture and ornamentals have **five agents**, and livestock has **three agents**. This disparity highlights the urgent need for additional support to ensure the sustainability and growth of the coffee industry.

Extension services play a crucial role in agriculture by providing farmers with the knowledge, skills, tools, and resources needed to improve their practices, increase productivity, and ensure food security. A dedicated extension associate for the coffee industry would offer specialized support to coffee (and orchard crop) farmers, helping them adopt best practices, manage pests and diseases, and navigate market challenges. This support is essential for the well-being of family-owned coffee farms, which are a hallmark of coffee production in Hawaii.

Investing in a full-time extension associate for the coffee industry will not only benefit individual farmers but also contribute to the overall economic health of the state. By enhancing the productivity and sustainability of coffee farms, we can ensure a stable supply of high-quality coffee, which is a significant export commodity for Hawaii.

In conclusion, the funding of a full-time, permanent extension associate at CTAHR's Kona Extension Office dedicated to the coffee (and orchard crops) industry is a critical step towards supporting the growth and sustainability of this vital sector. I urge you to consider this request and provide the necessary resources to ensure the continued success of Hawaii's coffee industry.

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:21:26 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Kawabata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jan. 28, 2025

Dear Senator Kim and Senator Kidani,

My name is Andrea Kawabata and I am an Extension Agent for Coffee and Orchard Crops with UH-CTAHR's Kona Research and Extension Center in Kealahou, HI. I write to you as an individual and community member of Hawaii. I also write to you in **support of Senate Bill 865**.

SB865 (and HB500) appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate (APT) position within UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension - my place of work. For the past two years this position has been requested, but now more than ever, I am pleading to you to support this bill and see to it that it is funded.

As you may already know, an Extension Agent's program SOLELY (except for \$3,000 from CTAHR) depends on external funding to hire staff, purchase supplies to organize and conduct outreach events, travel to farms, conduct applied research, translate materials, participate in industry conferences, etc. For the past 12 years, I have employed at least one APT annually to support Extension projects that provide outreach to the state's #3 agricultural commodity - coffee - and to the tropical fruit industry and to a lesser extent, the macadamia nut (#7) industry. Currently, I employ one full-time support staff who has been with my program for the past 6 years as we provide outreach statewide for coffee and to fruit and nut growers in West Hawaii. This staff and all other past staff employed under my program have been 100% GRANT FUNDED.

Since 2011, my program has brought in more than \$4.6 million. Together, staff and I have conducted hundreds of workshops, webinars, and field day events statewide and I can tell you first-hand that a second person is critical for event set-up, moving tables, chairs, putting up and breaking down tents, traveling with multiple luggages filled with educational booth display items, posting flyers, interacting with growers during public events, creating a monthly newsletter, posting events and announcements online, sending reminders to participants, moderating the chat and muting participants during webinars, taking photos and videos, etc.

We have helped coffee growers statewide develop and implement an IPM for coffee berry borer (CBB) control which has been successful at lowering CBB damage rates from 40% to less than 5%. We provided outreach on coffee leaf rust (CLR) prior to its arrival and so when it was first

found in Maui, we were able to help with its identification and published alerts, field guides, and sanitation and management recommendations immediately. We still have a lot of work to do with CLR but are gaining ground. Our own applied research projects have given coffee farmers additional tools for controlling CBB (Delegate WG, pruning, etc.), coffee root-knot nematode ('Meisner' rootstock, replant strategies, etc.), and CLR ('Ito' Catimor hybrid - the first vetted, CLR-resistant trees distributed to farmers, control recommendations, etc.). MUCH of this work would not be possible without staff support and NONE of it can be done without funding from at least THREE GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS ANNUALLY.

With that said, my program is in trouble. Since 2021, my Extension program has been part of a USDA NIFA SCRI coffee leaf rust grant that was awarded over \$6 million for four years. This past November 2024 and without any personal communications from the project director, **over \$260,000 from my USDA SCRI CLR grant outreach budget was diverted and given to researchers**, leaving me with ZERO funding for the final period (9/1/24-8/31/25) of the grant. Nearly half of my total contracted budget was swept. Because of this action by the PI, I now have over \$66,000 in budget shortfall for CLR project expenses and a dedicated staff who I am desperately trying to keep employed. This \$260K hole in my budget is extremely painful and not only hurts my program and staff, but also our ability to provide the much-needed support that Hawaii's farmers deserve. To address this loss of funds, I have already released staff and cut expenses. My next step is to reduce my staff's position, cut output to growers because of their reduced time commitments, and pursue funding from competitive grants which is never guaranteed.

This APT position described in SB865 (and HB500) will support Hawaii's top agricultural commodities and help my program focus on what's important - Hawaii's farming community. With this position, we hope to mirror the UH-CTAHR [SOAP](#) program with their full-time, permanent APT provided by legislature in 2018 and be able to expand our program as they have. And, while I would still seek grant funding to support and conduct educational outreach and applied research throughout the state, this permanent position would greatly alleviate the headache and heartache of letting farmers down because of the decision of folks who do not appear to have Hawaii's agricultural industries in their best interest.

I humbly ask you to support SB865 for funding. Thank you for taking the time to read my email and to hear my plead.

I'm happy to speak with you if you have any questions for me or concerns for the position.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kawabata

Extension Agent for Coffee and Orchard Crops

Kona Research and Extension Center

79-7381 Mamalahoa Highway

Kealakekua, HI 96750

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:06:55 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Donald	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB865 as farmers already have far too difficult a time considering all of the pests, drought, labor and other problems. Without the support of CTAHR and the employees we would be unable to continue to farm.

I can see no valid reason to withhold funding for this additional position.

Debbie Donald

Mokulele Farms

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:46:12 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
T Muramoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please fund this position supporting agriculture. The help provided makes a huge difference in promoting and supporting farmers.

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:16:38 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melvin S Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jan. 28, 2025

Dear Sir:

I am a third generation coffee farmer. I have been involved with farming my entire life. I have been involved with the farm bureau during which I have seen many of the extension agents come and go. I am also a director of the Kona Coffee Council.

I strongly support that SB865 and HB 500 be approved. Please appropriate for one permanent full time educational support associate (APT) position within UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension to provide support to coffee and orchard research programs .

Respectfully yours,

Melvin Kunitake , Retired farmer

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 2:20:41 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Moore	Testifying for KEALIA RANCH	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS BILL THAT PROVIDES FUNDING FOR THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT ASSOCIATE POSITION FOR COFFEE AND ORCHARD CROPS EXTENSION AND APPLIED RESEARCH PROGRAM. THE CTAHR EXTENSION SERVICE IS VITAL TO THE RANCH AND FARM COMMUNITY OF SOUTH KONA AND HAWAII COUNTY. THEY HAVE PROVIDED INVALUABLE SERVICE TO US HERE AT KEALIA RANCH AND ITS FUNDING IS CRITICAL TO THEIR ABILITY TO BE THERE FOR US WHEN WE NEED IT.

MAHALO IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF SB865

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 4:09:46 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Witcover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill for permanent funding of a staff support position at the UH-CTAHR Kona Extension Office. This area has so many farms and farmers who need support. One person alone cannot meet the needs of the area. Indeed, we need more positions to meet the needs. The position has been temporary and the added value has been so important and appreciated. Please support the Bill.

Carolyn Witcover

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 4:40:24 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Donald	Testifying for Waimea Coffee Farm LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

I'm writing to **STRONGLY** support funding of an additional assistant to the existing Extension Agent. The work done at the Kona experimental farm and research station is **INVALUABLE** to all coffee, nut and fruit tree farms throughout the islands and in particular to the 1200 coffee farms located across Hawai'i Island, of which I am one. It's because of the efforts of Andrea Kawabata, Matthew Miyahira and others from CTAHR & USDA PBAC that coffee farmers are able to take courses on site at the Kona Extension farm teaching myriad of courses on CBB control, CLR control, grafting, pruning, stumping, general land mangement, plant nutrition, coffee root knot nemotodes, pesticide use, protective clothing, respirator fitting and much more. These are some of the subjects I have personally benefitted from. As well, both Andrea and Matt have made many trips to visit my farm, Waimea Coffee Coffee (and numerous other farms) offering their expert advice on soil conditions, disease, pests, pruning and stumping, setting up CBB traps, and generally advising farmers on best practices and areas we can all improve upon. We constantly hear from our elected representatives how important they believe agriculture is to Hawai'i. Now is the time for our elected representatives to act backing those words with action. Funding a permanent assistant should not even be up for discussion. It's a no brainer!

Mahalo nui loa,

David Donald

Owner & Award winning Specialty Coffee Producer

Waimea Coffee Farm LLC

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 5:53:02 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Koontz	Testifying for Konaloha Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!, and thank you for your support on this bill. As a coffee farmer, I can testify as to the importance that UH-CTAHR plays in Hawaii's agriculture. It is the FIRST place where farmers go to with their questions. The research and knowledge CTAHR contributes to the farming community plays a crucial part in making this a successful business. The site visits, the Zoom lectures, the grafting of CLR resistant trees, and the fact that someone is always there to get back with you when you have a question, all contribute to make this a vital asset. One full time staff addition will more than pay for itself in benefits for the farming community. Please support this bill! Mahalo, John Koontz, Konaloha Farms

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:58:09 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharlene Gee	Testifying for Bea's Knees Farm, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Kona coffee farmer and a Kona Coffee Farmers Association member testifying in strong support of SB865, pertaining to an educational support associate position for coffee, etc. For years I have taken advantage of workshops, classes and field days, in-person and sometimes Zoom, to learn more about coffee pruning, nutrients, and dealing with coffee pests and diseases, established (beetle) and new (coffee leaf rust). The e-newsletter that is sent out is critical, my most valuable resource for staying abreast with the latest pertaining to coffee. It's timely, trusted, valuable information. I save them all and often reference them. It was very valuable to have the support staff fill in while the County Extension Agent was out on maternity leave. The workshops and field days have been better by having additional support, as well. Please fund this position.

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:30:04 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
margaret stump	Testifying for Giggle Hill Coffee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wish to express my unconditional support for funding a full time APT position with UH's Kona cooperative Extension Service.

Small family farms, like mine, have increasingly relied upon the extension service to help manage the recent emergence of coffee leaf rust and the continued spread of the coffee borer beetle. The service has provided invaluable, and timely, assistance on technical matters including in-person sprayer calibration, guides to environmentally friendly fungicides, integrated pest management techniques, and the development of rust-resistant coffee varieties. Their webinars have provided a wealth of information not available elsewhere. Site visits have also been of incredible value to us. These services are labor-intensive and go far beyond the normal capabilities of a dedicated group - not to mention a single individual.

Unfortunately, coffee farming on Hawaii has gone from a relatively straightforward business to a complex and nuanced one. I can say unequivocally that we would be out of business without the skilled assistance of Andrea and her team at Kona Extension.

Please recognize that we need a fully funded team to help us weather the current storm of disease and pests.

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:36:51 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Kimo Falconer	Testifying for Hawaii Coffee Growers Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

please support SB 865.
mahalo.

Aloha Esteemed Senators and Representatives,

I am writing on behalf of Kauai Coffee Company LLC. in full support of **SB865**. My name is Bronson B. Yadao. I am the Orchard Manager of a 3000-acre coffee plantation on the Westside of Kauai. As many of you know, Hawaii's coffee industry has been decimated by CBB (Coffee Berry Borer) and more recently CLR (Coffee Leaf Rust). Kaua'i was the last major growing region in the State (and world) to be infected by CBB and CLR. The discovery of both took place in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Geographic isolation is a blessing in the sense that Hawaii's coffee industry was able to stave off both pests- decades, centuries after most of the prominent growing regions of the world. Now that the entire State has both major pests- geographic isolation is also a curse in the sense that industry experts predominantly reside thousands of miles away in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

As it stands, UH CTAHR has a single extension agent with extensive coffee expertise residing in the Kona region of Hawaii island. Although Andrea Kawabata is very knowledgeable, capable and responsive- she is only a single professional- dealing with an ever-growing threat to the industry across the State.

I strongly support appropriating additional funding for much needed support for additional *expert staffing, educational events, applied research, travel for statewide outreach, equipment, and materials and supplies.*

Sincerely,
Bronson B. Yadao
Orchard Manager
Kauai Coffee Company LLC.
PO Box 530
Kalaheo, HI. 96741
(808)639-0839
byadao@kauaicoffee.com

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 5:10:42 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William C Wakefield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony for Bill SB 865

Dear Honorable Senators, January 28, 2025

Our ‘ohana has four small successful farms in Kona on the Big Island. We organically farm mango, citrus, and turmeric/olena. We also grow coffee and avocado on our Bishop leasehold farm. *My husband and I have been farming in Kona for about 40 years.* We use the UH College of Tropical Agriculture extensively! They have been an invaluable resource, and we know that we wouldn’t be as successful if it weren’t for their help and advise, especially helping us battle multiple invasive pests and the nutritional needs of our diverse crops. We derive 100% of our income from farming and now our son and his family are benefitting, also, along with our state’s hard working fellow farmers. With our state encouraging food sustainability, and with the growth and potential growth of agriculture in Hawaii right now, we feel that it is imperative to have as much agricultural support as possible and feel that having a permanent educational support associate to support our one extension agent will make a difference.

PLEASE support Bill SB865, appropriating funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience Kona Cooperative Extension. This will help secure the future of farming here, and will not only impact Hawaii’s economy, the next generation of young farmers, but also the livelihood and lifestyle of our island’s communities.

Sincerely and with much aloha,

William and Helen “Brooks” Wakefield

Wakefield & Sons, Inc. DBA Wakefield Organics, Ho’omalua Farm, Pea Nani Farm

PO Box 1454, Kealahou, Hawaii 96750

TESTIMONY OF STUART T. NAKAMOTO
Extension Economist/Specialist at UH-CTAHR

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025
3:05 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 865
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 865. My name is Stuart T. Nakamoto. I am an Extension Economist/Specialist at the UH-CTAHR however I am testifying on my own behalf and not the CTAHR. I strongly support SB865.

The reasons enumerated in the measure explain the rationale behind this request and the economic benefits of the coffee industry to the state. I would like to elaborate on some points.

The bill references a crop value of \$48.2 million, which is right after harvest at the farmgate. When value is added by further processing to green coffee (the stage before roasting) that crop is worth over \$67 million, while still at Hawaii agricultural operations. This revenue supports producers, their families, and their communities. Very importantly, coffee contributes much to the visitor industry and Hawaii's economy.

All with one agent.

Please support Senate Bill 865.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Testimony for SB865 – **Support**



January 29, 2025

To:
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Aloha e Committee,

I am testifying in favor of SB865.

There are more farms growing coffee in Hawai'i than any other crop. It is a crop that forms part of Hawai'i's agricultural identity and one that provides economic opportunities in the state and significant agricultural income for the state (it is one of the highest valued crops in the state, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=HAWAII).

As there is now but one extension agent supporting coffee- at a time when growing coffee is more challenging than ever before- providing support to that agent is essential.

Please, pass this bill.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read "Shawn Steiman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shawn Steiman, PhD.
Author, *The Hawai'i Coffee Book: A Gourmet's Guide From Kona to Kaua'i*
Owner, Coffea Consulting
Owner, Grok Coffee

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 9:36:14 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce W Mathews	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

January 29, 2025

TO: senkanuha@capitol.hawaii.gov , senchang@capitol.hawaii.gov , sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov , seninouye@capitol.hawaii.gov , senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov , senmckelvey@capitol.hawaii.gov , senrichards@capitol.hawaii.gov , sensanbuenaventura@capitol.hawaii.gov

Dear Senators Dru Kanuha, Stanley Chang, Mike Gabbard, Lorraine Inouye Michelle Kidani, Angus McKelvey, Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, and Joy San Buenaventura

Aloha!

My name is Bruce W Mathews

I urge immediate support for SB865 which would fund a full-time, permanent extension educational support associate position for the coffee and orchard crops outreach program based at the Kona Research Station and Cooperative Extension Office of the University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR). This support has previously been provided through grant funds however such critical extramural outreach funding has become insecure and there has been no project with appropriate funding to support such a position since 9/1/24. It has also become more difficult to compete for research grant funds where the majority of the budget is consumed in salary and fringe rather than applied research, associated outreach, and necessary research equipment/supplies.

Without funding for an education support associate the CTAHR coffee and orchard crop researchers ability to reach growers and community stakeholders throughout the State with practical science-based outreach assistance to support local, environmentally responsible agriculture will be severely constrained. This outreach assistance is critical for farmers as they deal with a myriad of production threats.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:14:51 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jon Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jan. 29, 2025

Dear Senator Kim and Senator Kidani,

My name is Jon Ching, and I have been working in the coffee industry for over 16 years including positions with Kauai Coffee and now with Waialua Estate of Dole Food Company Hawaii.

I write to you as a stakeholder of Hawaii's agriculture. I also write to you in **SUPPORT of Senate Bill 865**.

SB865 (and HB500) appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension to provide support for the coffee and orchard crop industries. The coffee industry is Hawaii's 3rd largest agricultural commodity encompassing 1,111 farms on 9,422 acres throughout the state and valued at \$49.9 million. The macadamia nut industry is 7th on this list with over 640 farms on 16,800 acres and valued at \$30.9 million. The fruit industry is especially diversified with over 1,700 farms on more than 7,800 acres on the Big Island.

Since 2011, the UH-CTAHR coffee and orchard crops extension program has brought in more than \$4.6 million in grant funding. The agent and her temporary staff have conducted hundreds of workshops, webinars, and field day events statewide to visit farmers and provide education, tools, and resources for the management of coffee berry borer (CBB), coffee leaf rust (CLR), coffee root-knot nematode, and other coffee pests and diseases, fruit tree and macadamia

propagation, irrigation, and research on organic mango fungicides, CBB pesticides, CLR-resistant trees, and improved rootstock with nematode tolerance.

The current coffee and orchard crops Extension program staff is 100% grant funded and in a temporary position. I also understand the funding for this position and coffee leaf rust outreach was diverted from Extension and so the position is in jeopardy of being cut. This position provides a necessary need for the Hawaii coffee industry and has contributed to the success of minimizing the damaging effects of the coffee pests we combat in our farms. If it wasn't for the Cooperative Extension, many coffee farmers would not have been educated and provided the resources to not only control their pests, but also learning techniques to improve tree health and yield.

This educational support position described in SB865 (and HB500) will support Hawaii's top agricultural commodities and help Extension focus on what's important - Hawaii's farming community.

SB865 has my complete support, and I humbly ask that you support it as well.

Thank you again for time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jon Ching

Waiialua Estate

Dole Food Company Hawaii

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:32:41 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roxana Myers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed state bill SB865 that seeks to fund a permanent Educational Support Associate position for the Coffee and Orchard Crops Extension and Applied Research Program at the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. As a collaborator of the team at the Kona Research Station, I have witnessed firsthand the phenomenal impact their dedication and hard work have had on the agricultural community. The large number of educational outreach events they have conducted, in person and online, is impressive considering their limited staff and resources. They have organized hands on and on farm training to improve growers' skills in grafting, pruning, pest and disease monitoring, and sprayer calibration. The extension program plays a pivotal role in disseminating cutting-edge research and best practices. Between organizing these events and carrying out farm visits to growers in need of support, they make time to conduct important research that directly results in increased yields and profitability. The team at the Kona Research Station go above and beyond to provide their stakeholders with the tools they need to be competitive in a global marketplace including the propagation and dissemination of coffee leaf rust resistant plant material and nematode resistant rootstocks. I urge you to support bill SB865 so the extension staff at the Kona Research Station can continue to provide this impactful support to our agricultural sector without fear of losing a critical team member due to a lapse in soft funds. Thank you for your consideration and support of this essential position.

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:35:42 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Okamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a coffee farmer I have benefited directly from the research conducted by the Kona Extension. I was able to purchase rust resistant strains and thus avoid having to treat my coffee trees. Keeping the costs of coffee farming low is critical to our small business. Andrea and her team have been most responsive to our needs but it is challenging because of the continuous threats to farming be it destructive insects or diseases. We need more help in this area if we are to maintain and sustain agriculture in our area. Thank you very much. Carol Okamura

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:35:43 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe Taylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, my name is Joe Taylor from Holualoa. Thank you for your time to read this. The extension service In Kainaliu has been critical to staying up to date with correct pruning techniques, spraying information and pest awareness for me and my neighbors farms. I really have enjoyed the great work of Andrea Kawabata and her education days. I take her print outs and pass em on to my neighbors who can't make it. Please continue to fund her work. It helps us tremendously.

SB-865

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:52:01 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luis F Aristizabal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have supported the Hawaiian coffee industry since 2012 by addressing issues related to the management of coffee berry borer (CBB) and coffee leaf rust (CLR), two of the most serious pests affecting coffee crops around the world. One of the difficulties faced by coffee growers in the Big Island is the low numbers of Agricultural professionals supporting educational training to growers. The UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension office had supported farmers by doing a good job, but its low number of Extension Agents have limited its capacity to reach high number of coffee farmers. Additional professionals supporting the training that coffee farmers and other growers need to be successful in their farms is extremely required now that farmers are facing real challenges such as the CBB and the CLR.

Best regards!

Luis F. Aristizabal

Independent Consultan

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SB-865

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 8:13:26 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jensen Uyeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Mercado Kim and Vice Chair Kidani, my name is Jensen Uyeda. I am submitting testimony as an individual supporting bill SB865 appropriating funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate Position for CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension. I currently serve as a CTAHR Extension Agent on Oahu, working with edible crops, and I understand Cooperative Extension's vital role in our communities.

Cooperative Extension is key in disseminating science-based information through non-traditional educational programs to the agricultural community. The Kona extension programs service the coffee industry on Hawaii Island and throughout the state. This industry is one of the highest-grossing agricultural industries, estimated at over \$48 Million. Over the last few years, this industry has been hammered with production challenges such as coffee berry borer (CBB) and coffee leaf rust (CLR), potentially reducing yields and increasing production costs. The educational programs provided to the industry by the Kona Extension programs have been vital to growers' success in overcoming these challenges. The program's capacity is limited, with only one extension agent and a temporary grant-funded educational support associate. If a permanent position is funded, the extension program will increase the ability to prioritize research and educational projects throughout the state. It will also increase the program's capacity to manage the Kona research station, where much of the research is being done to identify strategies to mitigate the problems brought on by CBB and CLR.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.