



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Friday, February 21, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

By

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University of Hawai'i System

HB 546 HD1 – RELATING TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) strongly supports HB 546 HD1 which appropriates funds to establish an artificial intelligence (AI) institute within UH to develop, support, and advance initiatives statewide.

As AI is rapidly transforming almost every aspect of daily life worldwide by enabling computers to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity, and autonomy, it is important for the state to stay ahead of this unprecedented evolution in technology. This measure seeks to formalize and integrate the efforts, expertise, activities and approaches across UH's ten-campus system to serve as a resource for UH and the broader community to encourage economic development that is aligned with the state's needs.

The AI institute will take a unified approach for AI insertion within activities involving UH, the state, and the greater community to address guidelines and policy, workforce development and training, and research and development in services, industries and clusters. These areas, where both UH and the state have capacity and have made investments, include: clean/renewable energy, climate resilience, space sciences and engineering, health, sustainable agriculture, additive manufacturing, creative media, and cultural preservation.

The University of Hawai'i intends to invest in the AI institute from revenue generated by its research activities and is asking the state to make an investment as a partner in this important initiative for the benefit of Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i supports HB 546 HD1 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in UH's BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support.



The House Committee on Finance
February 21, 2025
Room 308
10:00 AM

RE: **HB 546, HD 1, Relating to Artificial Intelligence**

Attention: Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **supports HB 546, HD 1, Relating to Artificial Intelligence.**

HB 546, HD 1, establishes and appropriates funds to establish the aloha intelligence institute within the University of Hawaii, including the establishment and funding of faculty positions. To ensure the recruitment and retention of the positions, it is essential for the FTE appropriation to have a recurring, general funded designation.

UHPA supports and requests the passage of HB 546, HD 1.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Fern'.

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly