



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
and  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

By  
Nicholas Comerford, Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
And  
Michael Bruno, PhD  
Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SB 2736 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Ruderman, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2736 that seeks to support the ornamental and landscape industry on O'ahu County, with particular emphasis on East O'ahu, by requesting three (3) faculty positions for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). The three positions, and their foci, are well-defined in the bill.

This is one of three bills that deals with biosecurity in the ornamental/landscape industry, which speaks to the problem that this industry is facing. This industry is an important economic engine for agriculture as, taken as a whole, it represents approximately two-thirds of the Hawai'i farm gate value.

Important components of this request focus on pesticide efficacy, labeling, education and training of both conventional and organic certified pesticides. This request fits the CTAHR's goals as it is dedicated to supporting all types of scientifically-based agriculture.

Another important point for this request is that while these positions are stated to work primarily in O'ahu County, all CTAHR faculty also have state-wide responsibilities. This is particularly true for all faculty with Extension appointments.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2736 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

JOSH GREEN  
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND ON  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2020  
3:00 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 229**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2736  
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL  
AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

Chairperson Kim, Chairperson Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2736, Relating to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR). The bill appropriates funds from the general fund for fiscal year 2020-2021 to be expended by UH CTAHR for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) ornamental and landscape entomologist specialist, one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) plant pathologist extension agent, and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) pesticide specialist. The Department supports the intent of this measure.

Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawai'i's agriculture, environment, and economy. Funding for control of invasive species is critical to ensure that appropriate responses can be developed which mitigate the negative impacts on the State's agriculture, environment, and economy. The Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan (HIBP) guides these efforts, and staffing is a critical component of the plan. Although the positions requested in this measure are not included in the HIBP, the Department nevertheless supports the proposal to add these three positions in support of UH CTAHR invasive species programs.



Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



LAND USE RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

1100 Alakea Street, Suite 408  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
(808) 521-4717  
[www.lurf.org](http://www.lurf.org)

February 4, 2020

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

**Testimony in Support of SB 2736, Relating to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHCTAHR) (Appropriates funds to the UHCTAHR for invasive species specialist and agent positions.)**

**Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 3:00 p.m., in Conference Room 229**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 2736**.

**SB 2736.** This bill proposes to make an appropriation to the UHCTAHR for staff positions, including a pesticide extension specialist; an entomology extension specialist; and a plant pathologist extension specialist needed to address the proliferation of invasive species and to protect the future of agriculture on Oahu.

**LURF's Position.** Invasive species such as insects, disease-bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other pests pose the greatest threat to Hawaii's economy, tourism, agriculture, the natural environment, native species and to the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's people. Invasive species already cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native wet, moist and dry land forests, and the spread of disease, but even more harmful viral, fungal and unidentified bacterial pathogens such as the unknown pathogen causing devastating crop decline in

ornamental ginger in windward Oahu, now threaten to invade all of the Hawaiian Islands and wreak further damage.

Despite efforts by the UHCTAHR and the Department of Agriculture to address this critical situation, more research and outreach is necessary to avoid further damage to the profitability and long-term sustainability of local agricultural and landscape production industries. Control of invasive species involves monitoring crop health, identifying issues in collaboration with other government agencies including the Department of Agriculture, examining the underlying causes of the problems currently faced, and developing solutions and remediation programs.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports SB 2736** and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



# HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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## TESTIMONY FROM THE HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

In Support of SB2736  
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL  
AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Tuesday, 02-11-20 at 3:00PM  
Senate conference room 229

Chair Kim, Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Ruderman, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) is in support of SB2736, which makes an appropriation to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) for the funding of three full-time positions: Ornamental and Landscape Entomologist, Plant Pathologist, and Pesticide Specialist.

Crop pests and diseases continue to be a threat to Hawaii's agricultural industry. Funding is needed to support three full-time positions within CTAHR that will help farmers deal with crop pests and diseases and set Hawaii up for success in reaching its food sustainability goals.

Currently, two of the needed positions are temporary and funded on soft money while the plant pathologist is slated to retire. We need more certainty and continuity within CTAHR to ensure the long-term success of Hawaii's agricultural industry.

Please vote yes on SB2736 to fund these important positions. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Emmanuel Zibakalam  
Program Director, Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

*The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through*



# HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

*education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.*

**SB-2736**

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 3:40:08 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2020 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Matt	Testifying for Performance landscapes	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass SB2736.

The landscaping and Ag industries are under attack.

Attack by invasive pests like Papaya Mealybug, Fire Ant, Podocarpus virus, Devils weed, Miconia etc.....

And Attack by activists who are ill-informed about our pesticide controls. We need the specialists that can educate the public and industry so we do the best job possible.

thank you





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

February 11, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2736**  
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL  
AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Room 229  
3:00 PM

Aloha Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Ruderman, and Members of the Committees:

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

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau strongly supports SB 2736**, which makes an appropriation to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources for ornamental and landscaping entomologist specialist, plant pathologist extension agent, and pesticide specialist positions

The excellent work performed by UH CTAHR for our Hawaii'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 very success. CTAHR has helped develop and improve agricultural technologies pertinent to Hawaii's farmers. 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.

Currently, the Ornamental and Landscape Entomologist and Pesticide Specialist positions are temporary and on soft money and a CTAHR Plant Pathologist is retiring. Hawaii's ornamental plant production exceeds \$70 million annually in wholesale value and contributes greatly to Hawaii's image as a lush tropical paradise. Oahu produces a

significant portion of this value but has not had a dedicated ornamental plant extension agent since the end of 2009. The recent emergence of new diseases that threaten ornamental ginger production adds to the need for assistance in this field. The pesticide specialist has also been important in the past in getting registrations for minor crops. All three positions are needed to help farmers deal with crop pests and diseases.

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





**EAST OAHU COUNTY FARM BUREAU**  
**910 CALIFORNIA AVE., WAHIAWA, HI 96786**

February 8, 2020

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, and Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair, and Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Ruderman, and Members of the Committees,

The East O'ahu County Farm Bureau, which represents approximately 420 farmers and supporters of agriculture from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **strongly supports SB 2736**, "Relating to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources," which would provide funding for an ornamental and landscape entomologist specialist, a plant pathologist extension agent, and a pesticide specialist under CTAHR. These positions would help to replace capabilities that are not currently available at CTAHR due in part to recent retirements.

Pests and diseases are constant threats to Hawai'i's agricultural crops, and every year more pests arrive. The proposed positions would help Hawai'i's farmers deal with these problems. The entomologist specialist would identify insect pests and determine best practices for their control. The pesticide specialist would determine best practices to minimize pesticide use while maintaining adequate pest control, and would compile data to allow registration of pesticides (including organic pesticides) for use on crops for which they aren't currently registered – a concern for Hawai'i growers, who often raise crops that are not commonly grown on the Mainland. The plant pathologist agent would identify pathogens such as fungi, bacteria, and viruses that are affecting crops, and educate farmers on the best ways to mitigate the effects of these pathogens. The emerging disease of red ginger, which is currently under study and which may involve several different pathogens, is an example of the sort of problem that this agent would help farmers to solve.

We recognize and appreciate the support in recent years that the Legislature has given CTAHR by funding a number of agent and specialist positions. We hope that this support represents a sustained commitment to increasing CTAHR's capabilities to assist Hawai'i's farmers. We therefore respectfully request that your committee approve the appropriation proposed by SB 2736. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher  
for Grant Hamachi, President  
East O'ahu County Farm Bureau

**SB-2736**

Submitted on: 2/8/2020 5:22:35 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2020 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nicole K Galase	Testifying for Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2736**

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 4:45:44 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2020 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Daniel Nellis	Testifying for Dole Food Co. Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

I am Dan Nellis, General Manger, Dole Food Co. Hawaii. Dole Hawaii supports this bill and in particular the need for a plant pathology and pesticides specialist positions at the UH Extension Service.

**SB-2736**

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 11:56:47 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2020 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Warren Watanabe	Testifying for Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2736**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 8:46:54 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2020 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:



**SB-2736**

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 3:58:33 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/11/2020 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kelvin Sewake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Members:

Aloha! As the former Interim Associate Dean and Associate Director for Extension, UH Manoa, CTAHR, I strongly support SB 2736 that seeks to address crucial Biosecurity issues that continue to plague Hawaii's agricultural industries. Throughout my 34 year career with CTAHR's Extension, I have witnessed first hand the problems created by the many invasive species that have destroyed crops, increased costs of production, and reduced farm profits. Furthermore, these invasive species have also damaged our fragile ecosystems and created health problems for Hawaii's citizens. Please support SB 2736! Mahalo!



**SB 2736 – form letter in support**

Dear Chairman Gabbard,

Aloha Chair Kim and Gabbard, Vice-Chair Kidani and Ruderman, and members of the committee,

I support SB2736, which makes an appropriation to the University of Hawaii CTAHR for ornamental and landscaping entomologist specialist, plant pathologist extension agent, and pesticide specialist positions.

This bill will assist farmers, who rely on extension agents and specialists, to continue to receive proper support from landscaping entomologists, plant pathologists, and pesticide specialists. Agents and specialists provide a free individual consultation to farmers battling crop disease, virus, bacteria, and other crop-related problems.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Mahalo!

1. Donald Sommer
2. Lorie Obra
3. Kenneth Ibara
4. Glenn Toyama
5. Stephen Takamiyashiro
6. Carver Wilson
7. Christine Brammer
8. Susan Cabral
9. Alvin Tsuruda
10. Randy Cabral
11. Verna Kuyper
12. Ron Kauhaahaa
13. Robert Paull