



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 Higher Education and Technology
Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 2:15 p.m.

By

Megan Donahue, Acting Director
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

And

Charles "Chip" Fletcher, Interim Dean
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 848 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII INSTITUTE FOR MARINE BIOLOGY

Chair Perusso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848, which appropriates funds for the following support staff positions at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB):

- 1) Building Maintenance Worker II
- 2) Administrative Officer APT-B
- 3) Website specialist APT-B

HIMB is a world-class center for research and education with a mission to advance understanding and stewardship of oceans and coasts locally and globally. The proximity of the twenty-six acre campus with high-quality lab facilities to a living coral reef provides unparalleled opportunities for research. HIMB's scientists, educators, and support staff bring in close to \$9M in research, education, and outreach funds annually that contribute to our ability to hire Windward-based staff. As these programs continually expand, new permanent staff positions are crucial to help us sustain daily operations and meet the needs and expectations of our community partners.

HIMB has a long history of undertaking cutting edge science and our scientists were the first to report large scale coral bleaching in Hawai'i and link it to high water temperatures, calling the world's attention to the consequences of global climate change. We apply our knowledge to address local as well as global problems. HIMB is pilot testing construction of hybrid reefs – human-built structures that interact with natural processes to create living reefs – that could reduce wave energy and protect nearshore cultural and infrastructure resources. HIMB is also testing novel shoreline erosion mitigation techniques that build on traditional practices to work *with* nature rather than fighting against it to shore up coastlines.

HIMB is well-known for internationally recognized training for students in conservation oriented and place-based scientific research, but we have also been working to expand vocational and technical training opportunities for local students. For example, we recently created a paid experiential learning internship program for local community college students to train with

Facilities, Administration, Water Safety, Fiscal or Human Resources departments within our institution, preparing local students for real world jobs close to home.

Success in growing such programs, which provide direct benefits to local students and the State, is dependent on having permanent support staff that possess the institutional memory to efficiently navigate the State and University systems and do not turn over with individual grant cycles.

Building maintenance is critical to the operations at HIMB, with 8 research buildings, 5 housing buildings, storage facilities, boat docks, and sheds. HIMB is already operating under a minimal facilities crew and struggles to keep up with existing infrastructure maintenance needs. This hire is critical for health and safety concerns. Filling this position will allow research and education activities that are highly relevant to the university and the State to continue operating safely in well-maintained buildings. Without adequate building maintenance, HIMB may not be able to maintain a functional research infrastructure.

HIMB currently has only two permanent Administrative Officers to support 25 faculty and manage over 130 project accounts. This project load requires extensive grant management, account maintenance, budget oversight, forecasting, procurement, and disbursement of appropriated, extramural, and revolving funds. Hiring this third Administrative Officer position is essential to avoid overtime pay, staff burnout (with subsequent departure), and loss of research capacity. This hire is critical for maintaining a minimum base level of research productivity; without it, extramural grant submissions and success would likely be significantly diminished, resulting in reductions in extramural funding and associated research spending in the state.

HIMB has never had a permanent Website Specialist position. Website support was previously fulfilled by graduate assistants or extramurally-funded part-time staff, but these positions have been discontinued. HIMB has been without dedicated website and information services support for several years. With extensive programming in research, education, visitor, and community service, HIMB critically needs a permanent staff member who can manage the entirety of our web presence, online dissemination, and social media needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:39:35 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mindy Mizobe	Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB) is currently severely understaffed. HIMB is an education institution that serves Hawai'i and hosts several research projects that are directly designed to care for the marine resources in Hawai'i. In order to do this effectively, we need a facility that functions efficiently. We have been able to get along through the tireless efforts of the support staff that work at this Institute. However, it is unsustainable to expect these few workers to shoulder this large burden. In order to thank these people for doing so much to keep this Institute going and creating the conditions to educate the students in Hawai'i and protect the natural resources of Hawai'i, we need to provide more stable job positions that will help the staff do their job well.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 1:16:03 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gus Robertson	He'eia NERR	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All three of these positions are notably important for Moku o Lo'e for not only maintaining the physical infrastructure. But also to insure we are keep pace in a digital era as well.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 12:41:37 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paolo Marra-Biggs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to help HIMB staff their operations

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:44:22 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssa VArela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:52:28 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua Hancock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 11:34:57 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judy Lemus	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Perusso, Vice Chair Kapela and Members of the Committee:

I am providing personal testimony in support for HB848, which appropriates funds for three support staff positions at the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB).

Since the 1950s, the University of Hawai‘i has had a marine science lab located on Moku o Lo‘e. And over the past seven decades, HIMB scientists helped establish aquaculture in the State of Hawai‘i, provided the first demonstration of coral bleaching as a result of thermal stress, and conducted the first studies on Hawaiian sharks. HIMB continues to occupy a pre-eminent position in research on coral reef ecosystem processes, marine animal biosensory ecology and bioenergetics, marine evolutionary and ecological genetics, and coastal technologies. HIMB faculty are leading experts in tropical marine biology research and education, advancing the informed stewardship of Hawai‘i’s marine and coastal biodiversity.

As a former Interim Director, Associate Director, and current faculty member of HIMB, I have first hand experience with the stressors and challenges that insufficient staffing creates on the productivity and innovation at HIMB. Faculty and staff are top-notch, but are continuously overloaded with work. For example, one full-time building maintenance worker is simply not enough to maintain all of the research, education, and housing buildings and auxiliary facilities on the 26-acre island campus. Elsewhere on UH campuses, there would be several workers to cover this amount of space and infrastructure.

Likewise, our productivity and ability to manage extramural funding is hampered by a shortage of administrative support. We have been quite successful attracting funding, in fact, our extramural awards are double what they were several years ago. But we are now challenged in operationalizing these awards due to heavy procurement and contracting protocols. Our existing two administrative staff do not have the bandwidth to provide all of these functions for 25 highly productive researchers. There is a real risk we may not be able to fulfill all of our award obligations without additional support, thus jeopardizing future funding for our Hawai‘i-based research and education.

Finally, our website and social media presence are essentially our digital calling cards to the rest of the world, both here in Hawai‘i and abroad. Today’s funders and donors EXPECT premier research institutes to have modern, innovative, and forward facing online platforms. Community members and schools rely on this online information about our many educational programs,

internships, and tours. HIMB has never had dedicated website support and at this critical time in which we are experiencing unprecedented growth, a full-time website specialist is especially important to our continued success.

Mahalo for your consideration in appropriating these important positions for HIMB.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:26:27 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Dacks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One thing that makes the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology stand apart is its amazing people. However, these amazing people are only able to showcase their incredible skills and capacity if they are able to do the work they were hired to do and not be sidetracked by administrative duties and building maintenance. Further, to properly communicate the magnificent successes of the institute requires a website specialist. This specialist is also instrumental for attracting further talent and funding in this day in age.

HB 848 – RELATING TO HAWAI‘I INSITUTE OF MARINE BIOLOGY

Chair Perusso, Vice Chair Kapela and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848, which appropriates funds for the following support staff positions at the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB):

- 1) Building Maintenance Worker II
- 2) Administrative Officer APT-B
- 3) Website specialist APT-B

As outlined in the bill’s language, HIMB is a world-class center of innovation for science and technology, place-based education, and indigenous resource management approaches, with a mission to advance understanding and stewardship of oceans and coasts locally and globally. HIMBs ~29 acre campus and associated facilities and programs provide direct benefits to local students and the State, are dependent permanent support staff and that possess the institutional knowledge to efficiently navigate the processes of the State and University of Hawaii. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to establish new permanent support staff positions that are critical to sustaining daily operations for the initiatives at HIMB.

My name is Malia Rivera, and I submit this testimony as an individual, and thus it doesn’t not represent official testimony of the University of Hawai‘i.

I have been at HIMB since 2005, serving as a tenured faculty member whose work focuses on K-20 marine science education and training, with an emphasis on creating access to place-based marine science research experiences for Hawai‘i students and facilitating pathways to undergraduate careers in this discipline. The goal of my efforts is to increase representation in professional pathways amongst students from Hawai‘i with the hopes of bolstering local workforce development. As a kama‘āina who grew up in ‘Āhuimanu and a graduate of James B. Castle High School, the communities around Kāne‘ohe Bay and the bay itself are special to me and thus my work is of personal importance, as my own journey navigating this pathway presented many challenges and barriers as an underrepresented student in STEM at UHM.

Despite the gains in increasing the number of marine STEM programs such as the ones I have created at HIMB for our local students, I, and my colleagues at HIMB, remain significantly hampered by the extremely heavy administrative and non-discipline related workloads we as individual faculty and staff must endure at the institute, relative to our colleagues on the main campus. Because HIMB at Moku o Lo‘e is a campus unto itself, we have burdens (both actual and fiscal) as far as the physical plant maintenance, grounds caretaking and administration that most other units at the University need not worry about (or pay for). For example, although my main responsibility is to create and deliver education and training programs for Hawai‘i students, I estimate I spend ~ 50% of my time on administrative tasks because our existing administrative staff are incredibly overtaxed. Since 2005, my program’s education and teaching staff have also been doing our own janitorial work, as HIMB has not had sufficient janitorial coverage for as long

as I can remember. We make do, but it comes at the expense of doing our primary jobs, that is, educating Hawai'i K-20 students in marine science. Relatedly, our website and communications, which help the broader community gain access to HIMB information and programs, and better understand HIMB's important work in marine conservation science, are dated and obsolete because existing staff have no time to address or update it.

Funding for these support positions is critical to HIMB's mission and would be a first step to help offset the existing significant burdens on current faculty and staff so they can more efficiently do the important work they were actually hired to do.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 10:52:39 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annie Innes-Gold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I'm a Marine Biology PhD student working at HIMB. I feel extremely fortunate to work at HIMB, and strongly support bill HB848. There is a lot of amazing work going on at HIMB, and it is clear that there is a need for more support staff. This bill would allow for three new positions, including building maintenance worker, administrative office staff, and a website specialist. All three of these positions would greatly improve the efficiency and functioning of HIMB as a whole, and contribute to HIMB being able to continue to serve as a world-class center of innovation for science and technology, place-based education, and indigenous resource management approaches. Approval of bill HB848 would be a great step in expanding the support staff of HIMB and allowing it to continue to benefit staff, students, and community members.

Thank you,

Annie Innes-Gold

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 11:00:02 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teagan Roome	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 11:02:18 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Kamalani Oshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

To whom it may concern,

My name is Zack Rago and I am a 3rd year PhD student at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology. I am writing this letter as an individual in support of the bill HB1136 and HB848. Having now worked at the institution for over 3 years I have seen first hand how incredibly dedicated our community is to making HIMB a one of a kind research station and holding ourselves to the highest standards of innovation and scientific excellence. Moku o Loe is a truly special place as it is the only marine research station located directly on a coral reef in the USA and is also backdropped by the beautiful Koolau range and Kaneohe Bay. That being said, the island in general is in desperate need of funds, support staff and the capacity to manage a degrading infrastructure. Seawalls around the island, including around my own experiments, are in terrible condition and quite frankly, even dangerous in certain locations. The degrading seawalls are only the tip of the iceberg. Generally the island's infrastructure is decades old and has been largely neglected despite an incredible facilities team who simply could never keep up with the number of repairs and developments that are needed to make HIMB safe, functional and more effective at producing top quality research. I firmly believe that this institution is one of the most important and unique assets to the University of Hawaii as well as to the state of Hawaii as a whole. However, this place is oozing with untapped potential that is being held back by this failing infrastructure and the inability to make significant changes without support from the state. The passing of this bill would immediately lead to positive outcomes for HIMB and our capacity to continue growing our reputation as world leader in marine science would continue on a trajectory where the state of Hawaii will be the national leaders in innovative science and technology, education and community outreach, and the professional development of countless up and coming researchers in the marine sciences.

Kindly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zack Rago". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end of the name.

Testimony in Support of HB 848

From: Jo-Ann Leong, Director Emerita
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

To: Honorable Amy Perruso, Chair
Honorable Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education and Technology

I write in support of HB848, which appropriates funds for three support staff positions: Building Maintenance Worker, Administrative Office, and Website Specialist at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology.

The Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB) is located on a 26 acre island and is responsible for the support and maintenance of its own sewer system, its own electrical bills, the operation of its internet connectivity, its trash removal, its own permitting with the state, its fiscal accounting, the maintenance of its buildings and other infrastructure. It is a large undertaking and as its education and research responsibilities have grown, it is in dire need of additional support staff positions.

Although HIMB is charged with full indirect cost rates of the main campus, it still must provide for its own security, janitorial services, internet maintenance, and landscape maintenance. HIMB has committed itself to be a truly Hawaiian place of learning and has opened its facilities to the community with outreach education programs and connections with the high schools for extended marine biology science experiences. Members of the community now serve on faculty search communities, strategic planning committees, and their contributions to the science in a historical context are critical to many of the continuing research projects at HIMB.

I ask for your positive vote in favor of HB 848.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 12:19:22 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shreya Yadav	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is a critical need for permanent support staff at HIMB, that is currently severely understaffed. Having these 3 positions if the bill passes will make a huge difference to the maintenance and upkeep of Moku o Lo'e while also lightening the load that current staff carry.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 12:13:05 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Zill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a PhD student at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology and I would like to submit testimony in support of HB848 (and HB1136). HIMB is a facility like no other. There are only a few research laboratories worldwide that provide year-round and immediate access to coral reef ecosystems, which allow for unique and important research opportunities on current topics of international interest such as climate change, coral bleaching and restoration, ocean acidification, long term monitoring projects, and overfishing, among many others.

HIMB attracts many high caliber professors and researchers who bring in prestigious grants, recruit and mentor students, and who otherwise would not be drawn to UH Manoa on its own. I personally would not have chosen to attend UH Manoa if HIMB were not a part of the university, especially due to the high cost of living and tuition that comes with attending UH Manoa; I know many graduate students who feel similarly. HIMB provides UH with a unique competitive edge over other university graduate programs that offer superior benefits, infrastructure, research funding, academic labor unions, and higher-paying and more stable graduate/teaching assistantships.

Any maintenance cost of this globally-recognized icon of marine research is minor compared to what HIMB brings to UH, Hawai'i, and the greater scientific community. Failing to adequately provide urgent financial support to HIMB would be equivalent to allowing a crown jewel of UH to sink into the ocean.

-Julie Zill, PhD candidate in the UH Marine Biology Graduate Program

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 12:48:05 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Carrier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology is world-renowned for the intellectual contributions of its researchers and students, but the team of support staff that maintain the administrative burdens and care for the physical infrastructure are crucial to any work being conducted there. Sitting exposed atop a basaltic remnant in Kāneʻohe Bay, HIMB experiences environmental extremes that are constantly testing physical and mechanical structures on island. Dozens of faculty, scores of students, and thousands of visitors each year can produce an administrative challenge. And the changing world requires the development of virtual spaces to share information, data, and experiences. A building Maintenance Worker, Administrative Officer, and Website Specialist would all be very helpful additions to the HIMB community (and prevent the burnout of current staff)!

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 12:50:58 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yoshimi Claborn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting this testimony as an individual, who is affiliated with the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology and am highly invested in its success. The three support staff positions that are being proposed, Building Maintenance Worker, Administrative Office, and Website Specialist, will enable HIMB to operate at a level that is crucial to its daily operations and elevate the work currently being conducted to its full potential.

The infrastructure at HIMB is constantly in need of maintenance as it is located on Moku o Lo‘e, an island in Kāne‘ohe Bay. With the thread of climate change, rising sea levels, and daily weathering due to being open to elements, the buildings need maintenance. Currently, shortage in staff has resulted in people conducting work to help each other out. A dedicated building maintenance worker will help to achieve the tasks that are amounting everyday and will help to provide basic resources to achieve the success of everyone working at HIMB.

The Administrative Office is also highly necessary as HIMB houses a multitude of not just researchers but graduate students, undergraduate interns, postdoctoral scholars, and many other specialists. The Admin Office staff deals with all requests at all levels, including HR, travel, and many others. Equity in workload on admin staff will increase efficiency and the rate at which work is being conducted at HIMB.

Finally, a Website Specialist is specifically needed as a website is the frontfacing element of HIMB. All groups, like tours, school groups, the public, and interested students all go to the website to gain information. Up to date information must be conveyed on the website and a dedicated staff member to conduct this work will elevate the work at HIMB, bring in more resources, and make the work conducted at HIMB more meaningful.

I support this bill HB848 for the above reasons.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 1:42:14 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleonani KC Hurley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Hawaii State Legislature

I am a postdoctoral researcher at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology and I Strongly support HB848 so that our institute can continue to serve as a world-renowned center for excellence in marine and Indigenous science and education.

me ke aloha,

Kaleonani Hurley

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 1:59:15 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick Reppun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. HIMB is currently understaffed, and this is hampering the activities of the Institute. These positions would greatly assist all programming to continue, including obtaining and executing extramural research grants for cutting edge research and education.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 3:59:52 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelle Freel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of bill HB848 which would provide crucial staff support needed for the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology. I write this support as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i. The labs and collaborators that work on Moku o Lo'e conduct world-class research. For this research to happen efficiently and for the community to be aware of the research on the island, I support this bill as it would provide essential support staff that will be beneficial to those working on the island as well as the broader community. I hope that you decide to support this bill.

Thank you very much for your time.

Kind regards,

Kelle

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 4:42:47 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HIMB is invaluable to the health of Kaneohe Bay and must have the resources it needs.

HB-848

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:28:08 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Heckman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology on Moku o Lo'e in Kane'ohe Bay is a treasure. There is no other marine biology training site, in the entire world, where our students and researchers can go from a high tech lab, to living corals reefs within minutes, and experience the challenges of island life dealing with global climate change, culture change and opportunities, food security, and more. I would argue that because it is an island institute, surrounded by water, accessed by water only, and threatened in a very visible ways every day by the same issues that challenge Hawaii and the world at large in a slightly more remote fashions, it is an ideal training ground and way to show the world how Hawaii is integrating culture, science and problem solving in ways that no one else has been able to do. It is a showcase for the leadership of Hawaii. We are doing what no one else has. Lets support it.