



The House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
January 31, 2024
3:00 PM
Room 229

RE: **SB 2817, Relating to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources**

Attention: Chair Donna Mercaho Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support of SB 2817**, Relating to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, **with the following amendments**.

SB 2817 establishes five full-time permanent extension agent and extension specialist positions at the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. However, the bill incorrectly lists these positions as administrative, professional, and technical positions.

Under HRS §304(A)-1002, the University of Hawaii's Board of Regents has the exclusive authority to classify all members of the faculty of the university, including research workers, extension agents, specialists, and all personnel engaged in instructional work as referenced in HRS §76-16. Thus, by law, extension agents and extension specialists are already classified as Faculty.

UHPA recommends "*administrative, professional, and technical*" be amended to "*faculty*" to ensure proper execution of these positions.

UHPA further recommends the funding source be amended from "*the university of Hawaii tuition and fees special fund*" to the "*general fund*", to ensure the recruitment and retention of the positions. It is essential for the FTE appropriation to have a recurring, general funded designation.

UHPA requests the passage of SB 2817 with amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly



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February 1, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON SB 2817
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL
AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
3:00 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 2817, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to establish five administrative, professional, and technical full-time equivalent (5.0 APT FTE) positions at the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

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.

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



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2817 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2817 relating to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture Human Resources (CTAHR) which appropriates funds out of the University of Hawai'i tuition and fees special fund for fiscal year 2024-2025 for CTAHR to establish five administrative, professional, and technical full-time equivalent (5.0 APT FTE) positions.

CTAHR supports the intent of this bill however, we respectfully offer suggested amendments. Specifically, this bill aims to help rectify significant gaps in the reach of Cooperative Extension programs due to vacancies that have surfaced in the past four years. We suggest the following amendments to SECTION 2 based on the distinction between extensions positions and administrative, professional and technical (APT) positions. Extension Agents are 100% allocated to extension activities; they transmit information to stakeholders and may collaborate on research efforts. Extension Specialists typically have a split full-time equivalent appointment allocated to extension, research or instruction. Extension Specialists typically conduct applied research addressing immediate issues, and provide information to Extension Agents or directly disseminate information to stakeholders. APT positions do not perform extension, research or instruction activities and do not transmit information to stakeholders.

SUGGESTED ADMENDMENTS:

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the CTHAR at the UHM to establish five full-time equivalent (5.0 FTE) positions; provided that the sums appropriated shall be expended as follows:

- (1) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in water quality and conservation in the county of Maui;

- (2) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in livestock in Hilo, county of Hawaii;
- (3) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) state extension specialist in livestock at the university of Hawaii at Manoa;
- (4) \$ for one full-time equivalent agent in urban horticulture and food systems in the city and county of Honolulu; and
- (5) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in health and community development in the county of Maui.

The sum appropriate shall be expended by the university of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

CTAHR's Cooperative Extension relies on the knowledge and experience of county extension agents and extension specialists to extend research-based knowledge from the land-grant university out to the residents and agricultural producers of the state. That capability has been severely hampered by a string of resignations and retirements happening just prior to, and during, the COVID-19 pandemic. Agricultural producers from around the state have expressed how important these noted positions are essential to the health and well-being of Hawaii's agricultural producers and consumers.

We can support SB 2817 with the suggested amendments, provided its adoption does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the measure.