



# 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  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience  
and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD  
Interim Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 1952 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1952 HD1. This measure authorizes the issuance of GO bonds and appropriates funds for capital improvements for the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's (CTAHR) Agricultural Research and Extension Station (CARES) on Kaua'i.

The Kaua'i CARES center develops research-based solutions to pest, disease, and climate adaptation challenges in the production of coffee, cacao, orchids, vegetables, forages, and goats, and is the primary location of invasive species research and coordination, seed production, Native Hawaiian kalo collection, and delivery of multi-language training in pest and disease management, soil fertility, pesticide education, and food safety on the island.

However, many of the station's facilities are too old and do not comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and environmental safety requirements. It is critical to meet ADA and environmental compliance, construct new laboratory and field facilities to support existing projects, fencing, farm manager cottages, and expand new research on sheep and goat production. The urgent need for a certified kitchen will support nutritional education, culturally-relevant recipe innovation, new product development, and address food and nutritional insecurity challenges.

CTAHR is currently recruiting a new livestock and 4-H agent, and seeking a new community coordinator to help build the CARES center as a hub for collaborative innovation and community prosperity. The appropriation for capital improvements in HB 1952 HD1 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



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February 25, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1952, HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference  
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, 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 HB 1952, HD1**, which authorizes the issuance of GO bonds and appropriates funds for capital improvements for the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Agricultural Research and Extension Station on Kaua'i.

The CTAHR Agricultural Research and Extension Station (CARES) on Kaua'i provides essential support to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural communities on the island through applied research, education, and extension services. These services address a wide range of needs, including pest and disease management, invasive species response, soil health, climate adaptation, and food safety.

Many of the Kaua'i CARES existing facilities are outdated and no longer adequately support current programs, safety requirements, or accessibility standards. HB 1952, HD1 addresses these deficiencies by authorizing capital improvements that will modernize laboratories and research spaces, correct environmental and ADA compliance issues, and provide appropriate facilities to support education and outreach activities.

These improvements will allow CTAHR faculty and extension staff to better serve producers, expand training opportunities, and support research that is directly relevant to Kaua'i and Hawai'i's agricultural sector. Modern, functional facilities are necessary to maintain effective extension services and ensure that research and education programs remain responsive to on-the-ground agricultural needs.

Investing in the Kaua'i Agricultural Research and Extension Station strengthens local agricultural capacity, supports farmers and ranchers, and helps ensure that CTAHR can continue to provide timely, practical assistance to the agricultural community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**HB-1952-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:24:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

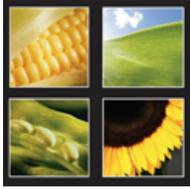
<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Blazak	Hilo County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Hilo County Farm Bureau strongly supports HB1952 HD1. Kaua'i has a strong and diverse agricultural sector that is vital to our state's economy and food security. Repairs and improvements at the Cooperative Extension Experiment Station on Kaua'i will ensure current and future farmers, ranchers, and community members have access to field-based experimentation, modernized facilities, and technical assistance they need from the Cooperative Extension Service to effectively address agricultural and environmental concerns. Thank you.

Megan Blazak  
Chapter President  
Hilo County Farm Bureau



# HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

HB1952 HD1 – In Support  
Relating to Agriculture

House Committee on Finance

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB1952, HD1** which authorizes the issuance of GO bonds and appropriates funds for capital improvements for the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Agricultural Research and Extension Station on Kauai.

The Kauai Agricultural Research and Extension Station plays a vital role in supporting the island's farmers, ranchers, and communities. It provides research-based solutions to pests, diseases, and climate-related challenges. Yet despite its importance, many of the station's facilities are outdated and deteriorating. These limitations restrict the station's ability to serve the public effectively and equitably, and they hinder the delivery of essential education and research services.

Authorizing general obligation bonds for these capital improvements will support local agriculture, invasive species management, and workforce development, which contributes to the long-term sustainability of Kauai and the State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support.

*The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.*



**Kalepa Koalition**

5868 Kini Place  
Kapaa, Hawaii 96746  
Phone/Fax: 808-639-0152

February 24, 2019

TO: **Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems**  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

RE: **Testimony on HB1952, HD 1, Relating to Kauai Agricultural Research and Extension Station**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2026, Video Conference, Room 308**

Chairperson Todd and Members of the Committee:

We **strongly support HB769, HD1**, authorizing capital improvements at the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience Agricultural Research and Extension Station on Kauai. The Kalepa Koalition is a Hawaii agricultural cooperative of the farmers and ranchers who hold long-term licenses on 6,500 acres of State land behind Kalepa Ridge on Kauai and under the administration of ADC. The area is immediately adjacent to the ag station on Wailua Reservoir.

The Kaua'i research and extension station provides important support to local farmers and ranchers through applied research, education and extension services. These services help address issues such as pests, disease, soil health and climate impacts—all of which are of direct concern to our members.

Many of the station's facilities are outdated and need improvements to meet current safety, accessibility, and program needs. Investing in modern facilities will help extension staff and researchers better serve the agricultural community and continue providing practical assistance to producers on Kauai.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie P. Milnes".

Leslie P. Milnes, President  
Kalepa Koalition

February 24, 2026

To: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi and the House Committee on Finance

Subject: **HB1952 HD1**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha,

We at Hawai'i Food+ Policy appreciate the opportunity to testify **in support of HB1952 HD1**, which appropriates general obligation bonds and appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Agricultural Research, as well as the extension station on Kaua'i, for necessary capital improvements to carry out its mission and support the broader community.

The agricultural research conducted by the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Agricultural Research serves as a primary place for developing solutions to pests, diseases, and climate-adaptation challenges in the production of coffee, cacao, orchids, vegetables, forages, and goat. They coordinate research of invasive species, coordination, seed production, Native Hawaiian kalo collection, and the delivery of training in pest and disease management, pesticide education, soil fertility, and food safety on Kaua'i.

We **urge this committee to pass HB1952 HD1** to authorize the issuance of General Obligation bonds and appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Agricultural Research and Extension Station on Kauai for capital improvements. As these funds will ensure research is being conducted to support and provide a sustainable environment and will help to develop solutions needed for the development of sustainable agricultural practices. The support of this bill will safeguard the health, culture, language, and food sovereignty for the community.

Mahalo,  
Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



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

February 24, 2026

Representative Chris Todd, Chair, and Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The East O'ahu County Farm Bureau, which represents approximately 420 farmers and supporters of agriculture from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **strongly supports HB 1952 HD1**, "Relating to Agriculture," which would provide funding for capital improvements at CTAHR's research and extension station on Kaua'i.

CTAHR's research and extension stations provide important support to local farmers and ranchers through applied research, education, and extension services. These services help address issues such as pests, disease, soil health, and climate impacts. Many of the Kaua'i station's facilities are outdated and need improvements to meet current safety, accessibility, and program needs. Investing in modern facilities will help extension staff and researchers better serve the agricultural community and continue providing practical assistance to producers on Kaua'i and throughout the State.

CTAHR's continuing research, education, and extension activities are essential to Hawai'i's agricultural production. We hope you will support Hawai'i's agricultural community by passing HB 1952 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter of great importance to Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

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

**HB-1952-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:24:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards, a resident of Wainiha on the North Shore of Kaua‘i. I strongly support HB1952 HD1.

The Kaua‘i Research and Extension Station provides essential support to our farmers and ranchers through applied research, education, and extension services. Their work addresses pests, disease, soil health, and climate impacts — real challenges that directly affect Kaua‘i’s agricultural viability and food security.

Many of the station’s facilities are outdated and no longer meet current safety, accessibility, or program needs. Modernizing these facilities will allow extension staff and researchers to better serve producers and continue delivering practical, island-specific solutions.

This investment strengthens Kaua‘i’s rural economy and long-term resilience.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB1952 HD1.

**HB-1952-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:22:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**HB-1952-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:35:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives Chun,Kakalia,Kusch,Matsumoto and Perrielo,

My name is Johnny Gordines. We support HB1952 regarding the issuance of GO bonds and appropriate funds for capital improvements at the CTHAR Kaua'i Agricultural Research Station (KARC).

I am retired from state employment at KARC after 32 years of employment of which I was the Farm Manager for my last 10 years.

There are 260 acres of prime agricultural land at the facility and an unlimited source of water from the adjacent Wailua reservoir for research projects. KARC is the only facility on Kaua'i able to service Kauai farmers and ranchers with the dedicated assistance of the UH CTAHR extension agents.

Capital improvements will further provide needed quality service to Kauai's Farmer's and Ranchers.

Thank you for your support for Kaua'i agriculture!

Respectfully,

Johnny Gordines. 808 651-9711