SB 2145 proposes adding to HRS 205 a new section entitled "Protection of Hawaii's unique flora and fauna". This statement on the bill does not reflect an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We agree with the findings expressed in the bill that there are areas of the State that are not in the Conservation district but that provide habitat for rare floral and faunal species unique to Hawaii and/or in which there are high-quality native forests.

The new section of HRS 205 that is proposed would provide that the "Department of Planning and Economic Development (DPED) shall initiate amendments to the conservation district boundaries" to include areas of the sort to which reference is made in the findings, and that the DPED may seek assistance from other agencies and may employ consultants in this respect.

A change in conservation district boundaries requires action by the Land Use Commission attached to the DPED. However, it would seem that the Department of Land and Natural Resources rather than the DPED should have the greater concern with and greater staff competence related to both high-quality native forests and unique flora and fauna. Whichever Department is charged with the responsibility that would be provided in the bill should be free to seek assistance from other agencies and consultants as proposed.