



LATE

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BY E-MAIL

March 20, 2008

The Honorable Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair and Members,
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs
The Honorable Senator Ron Menor, Chair, and Members
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 224
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 2502, HD2 Relating to Solar Energy
(Solar energy facilities permitted in D and E Agricultural Districts)**

Dear Chair Tokuda, Chair Menor and Committee Members:

My name is Dave Arakawa, I am the Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. One of LURF's missions is to advocate for reasonable and rational land use planning, legislation and regulations affecting common problems in Hawaii.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our testimony **in support of H.B. No. 2502.**

H.B. No. 2502. The purpose of this bill is to make the most productive use of marginal agricultural lands by including solar energy facilities as permitted uses within the agricultural district on land meeting the following requirements:

- (1) The soil is classified as overall (master) productivity rating class D or E by the Land Study Bureau's detailed land classification;
- (2) The total acreage used by the facility is the lesser of ten acres or one percent of the parcel;
- (3) The land is located near specified electrical transmission and distribution systems; and
- (4) The land can generate at least a specified amount of solar energy.

LURF's Position. LURF is in strongly supports H.B. No. 2502, based on the following grounds:

- Renewable energy resources can greatly benefit Hawaii's economy, environment, energy security, and sustainability. The increased use of Hawaii's abundant renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, ocean thermal, wave, and biomass resources, is key to reducing Hawaii's green house gas emissions and contribution to global warming and creating new job opportunities and economic diversification;
- A majority of the Agricultural District, especially marginal agricultural lands classified as D and E lands, are not in active Agricultural production;
- Pursuant to HRS §205-2(d), the Agricultural District already allows renewable energy alternatives and uses, including the following:
 - (4) Wind generated energy production for public, private, and commercial use;
 - (5) Biofuel production as described in section 205-4.5(a)(15) for public, private, and commercial use; and
 - (7) Wind machines and wind farms.
- Allowing solar energy facilities to be built on marginal agricultural lands may have more beneficial effects for Hawaii's economy, environment, and energy security than leaving such lands unused.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express our support and comments relating to this matter.

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Sunpower

Herbert M. (Monty) Richards
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TESTIMONY OF WARREN BOLLMEIER ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAII RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURAL AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS AND ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

HB 2502 HD2, RELATING TO SOLAR ENERGY

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Chairs Tokuda and Menor, Vice-Chairs English and Hooser and members of the Committees I am Warren Bollmeier, testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Renewable Energy Alliance (HREA). HREA is a nonprofit corporation in Hawaii, established in 1995 by a group of individuals and organizations concerned about the energy future of Hawaii. HREA's mission is to support, through education and advocacy, the use of renewables for a sustainable, energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly, economically-sound future for Hawaii. One of HREA's goals is to support appropriate policy changes in state and local government, the Public Utilities Commission and the electric utilities to encourage increased use of renewables in Hawaii.

The purpose of HB 2502 HD2 is to make solar energy facilities a permitted use in the agricultural district on class D or E land.

HREA **supports** this bill, as provides clear guidance to approving agencies that solar is a permissible use in the agricultural district on class D or E land.

HREA notes that the proposed limitation of solar facilities to marginal land (class D or E) is appropriate. For example, a large array of solar collectors could cover large sections of land, potentially making the land underneath the collectors unusable for agricultural purposes. Whereas, wind projects are often dual use, e.g., windfarms on agricultural land used to graze cattle, or interspersed in the corn fields, such as in Iowa.

While it makes sense to allow the use of marginal agricultural land for solar installations, we also recognize that there could be competing agricultural uses for class D and E lands, including macadamia nuts, papayas and energy crops. Thus, HREA is open to discussion regarding cases where there may be competing uses.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.