



Hawaii Solar Energy Association
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TESTIMONY OF THE HAWAII SOLAR ENERGY ASSOCIATION
IN REGARD TO H.B. 2505
RELATING TO ENERGY
BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
ON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2008

Chair Morita, Vice-Chair Carroll, my name is Richard Reed and I represent the Hawaii Solar Energy Assn. (HSEA). HSEA supports the passage of H.B. 2505, with qualifications.

It is clear that we must accelerate the implementation and commercialization of renewable energy resources in Hawaii. It is equally clear to many that have worked on large scale projects in Hawaii that compliance with our various permitting entities can be complex and time consuming.

H.B. 2505 seeks to simplify this process by creating within DBEDT a full-time, permanent renewable energy project "facilitator". There is no discussion of the facilitator's actual authority to expedite permits and cut through red tape, so we presume the position will be largely that of a competent advisor steering potential project investors through the various hoops and land mines.

This role certainly has value, but we remain concerned that facilitation alone will be sufficient to simplify, clarify, and expedite the permitting process that now wanders through so many different agencies and jurisdictions.

In recent memory the DBEDT Energy Division has been under funded relative to the many tasks they have been asked to administer. Although the position is described as permanent, funding is only requested for one fiscal year. In my experience it will take the new appointment at least that long simply to come up to speed.

In general, we believe that DBEDT will need to acquire a number of competent full-time staff over the next few years to administer, analyze, and manage the incredibly important transition that is now underway in Hawaii from a fossil to renewable based economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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TESTIMONY OF WARREN BOLLMEIER ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAII
RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

HB 2505, RELATING TO ENERGY

February 5, 2008

Chair Morita, Vice-Chair Carroll and members of the Committee 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 2505 is to establish a renewable energy facilitator position with DBEDT. HREA strongly supports this bill with the following comments:

1. Need for Government Assistance to Developers of Renewable Energy Projects. Renewable energy developers do face a "steep" learning curve in Hawaii when it comes to permitting projects, especially on government land. Thus, it would be extremely helpful if a dedicated "Energy Coordinator" could work full-time to:
 - a. assist developers in identifying required permits, and
 - b. work with other agencies to coordinate the permitting processNote: by "coordinate" we mean, in part, identifying which permits can be processed in parallel, as opposed in sequence, which should save developers time and money;
2. DBEDT-Energy Office. HREA notes there is a broader discussion regarding whether the Energy Office should be strengthened and/or elevated within DBEDT, or whether a state Dept. of Energy should be formed. Regardless of the outcome of that discussion, the "Energy Coordinator" position is needed yesterday and will certainly be needed tomorrow; and
3. Permanent Position. Given the above, HREA supports the provision of the "Energy Coordinator" as a permanent position, funded by the state.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
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Statement of
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before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Tuesday, February 5, 2008
8:45 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312
in consideration of
HB 2505
RELATING TO ENERGY.

Chair Morita, Vice Chair Carroll, and Members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of HB 2505 that establishes and funds a renewable energy facilitator position. The position is also provided in the Executive Supplemental Budget to assist developers with the permit approval process and to initiate implementation of appropriate facilitation strategies as intended by this measure.

Pursuant to SCR 164, Regular Session of 2007, DBEDT conducted a study to create a one-stop permit shop for renewable energy projects. The study, submitted to the Legislature, provides information on a number of permit facilitation strategies successfully employed in other states to assist renewable energy project developers without diminishing environmental

objectives. The renewable energy facilitator position is critical to implementation of these strategies.

DBEDT recommends strongly that any effort at improving Hawaii's permitting processes be provided with the appropriate authority and commensurate resources to undertake this difficult task.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.