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HAWAII RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE

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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 process

Note: 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.