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Statement of
ABBEY SETH MAYER
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Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION
AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Tuesday, April 1, 2008
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of
HB 2526, SD1
RELATING TO THE STATE PLAN.

Chairs Kokubun and Baker and Vice Chairs Ige and Tsutsui, and Members of the Senate Committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Affordable Housing and Ways and Means.

The Office of Planning (OP) provides comments on HB 2526, SD1, Relating to the State Plan. This measure amends Chapter 226, HRS, the Hawaii State Plan, to create a new section to direct land use regulatory authorities at the State and county levels to ensure plans and implementation are guided by smart growth principles; adopts the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan; establishes a Sustainability Council and appropriates funds for the creation of the Sustainability Council. The Office of Planning offers comment on Part I of the bill.

OP agrees that health, interests, and concerns of the people of Hawaii should be the primary objective of land development; that planning should strive to provide healthy and livable housing for all individuals; and that planning for land development should balance the quality of life with economic growth and land development.

Governor Linda Lingle, in her State of the State address, shared her continued commitment to a transformation of our state economy away from an economy based too narrowly on land development to one based on the talents of Hawaii's people. The Governor also noted the challenge to re-orient an economy long based on land to one that has as its cornerstone the preservation of our cultural and natural resources.

OP supports the intent of Part I of the bill to ensure that State and county plans are formulated, amended, and implemented taking into consideration the policies and principles set forth in this bill.

We have reservations with respect to Section 2 of Part I of the bill in that County general plans are policy documents which provide direction. Thus, it is unclear how they would require/mandate compliance with smart growth principles. We suggest alternative language similar to Sec. 226-58(b)(1) which would say that county general plans should contain objectives to address smart growth principles.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**The Chamber of
Commerce of Hawaii**

Since 1850

**Testimony to the Senate Committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection &
Affordable Housing and Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 1, 2008; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 229**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2526, SD1 RELATING TO THE STATE PLAN

Chairs Kokubun and Baker, Vice Chairs Ige and Tsutsui, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 2526, SD1 with comments.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing over 1100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. The organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The measure adds as an objective in the state plan that land development shall be in compliance with smart growth principles. The measure enacts the Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan and establishes a sustainability council to coordinate, implement, measure, and evaluate the progress of the Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan and activities.

The Chamber supports the need to focus on the future and create an environment in Hawaii that provides a certain quality of life for the next generation of Hawaii residents. We participated in the process of developing the 2050 Sustainability plan, and support the need for continuing this process. In regards to the Sustainability Council, however, The Chamber believes that the Council should serve an advisory role only and not as another governing layer in the process.

Therefore, The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii supports HB 2526, SD1 provided that the Council serves an advisory role only. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



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March 31, 2008

The Honorable Russell S. Kokubun, Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection,
And Affordable Housing

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol, Room 229
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: H.B. 2526, SD1 Relating to the State Plan
Hearing Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2008 @ 9:00 a.m., Room 229

Dear Chairs Kokubun and Baker and members of the Senate Joint Committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Affordable Housing and Ways and Means:

On behalf of our 10,000 members in Hawaii, the Hawaii Association of REALTORS® (HAR) supports the intent of Part I of H.B. 2526, SD1 which requires land development to comply with smart growth principles.

HAR served on the Interim Task Force on Smart Growth created pursuant to HR 259, Regular Session of 2007 and was very pleased with the high level of cooperation and discussion that occurred at all of the meetings. Smart growth principles include creating a range of housing opportunities and choices, mixed land uses, and providing a variety of transportation choices. Part I of H.B. 2526, SD1 will ensure that a comprehensive approach to land development complies with smart growth principles, which have been proven to make communities better and to improve the quality of life in all neighborhoods.

Within the concept of smart growth principles mandated as policy, it would be beneficial to community residents and developers to incentivize such efforts. Some modest examples to encourage smart growth include amending zoning codes to allow smart growth, expediting the permitting process, providing density bonuses, and mixed-use zoning.

HAR looks forward to working with our state lawmakers in building better communities by supporting quality growth, seeking sustainable economies and housing opportunities, embracing the cultural and environmental qualities we cherish, and protecting the rights of property owners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.