

HAWAII RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE

46-040 Konane Place #3816, Kaneohe, HI 96744 – Telephone/FAX: 247-7753 – Email: wsb@lava.net

Officers

President
Warren S. Bollmeier II

Vice-President
John Crouch

Secretary/Treasurer
Cully Judd

Directors

Warren S. Bollmeier II
WSB-Hawaii

Cully Judd
Inter Island Solar Supply

John Crouch
Sunpower

Herbert M. (Monty) Richards
Kahua Ranch Ltd.

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

SB 2847, RELATING TO SOLAR ENERGY

February 26, 2008

LATE

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 SB 2847 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, 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 and energy crops. Thus, HREA is open to discussion regarding cases where there may be competing uses.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.