

TESTIMONY BY JOANN A. YUKIMURA

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

RE HB 1464, HD1

February 10, 2009

2 p.m.

Conference Room 325

Chair Herkes and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce—

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

I am in support of HB Bill 1464, HD1 with reservations. I believe it could be a much stronger law if you were to remove the demand water heater device from eligibility for a variance. The present wording basically allows a fossil fuel alternative that will not protect a family from ever-rising oil/gas prices and will continue to contribute to global warming. The Gas Company has seen the handwriting on the wall and is now including in its inventory a solar water heating system with gas as a backup (which would be allowed without the variance provision). It is showing it is capable of changing with the changing times. Bravo for the Gas Company! Can the Legislature do the same and have the courage to pass a true solar water heating bill that will effectively help our families reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and stem carbon loading of the atmosphere?

I do certainly appreciate and support the provision in HB 1464, HD1 which explicitly allows the individual counties to pass a stronger law. It is important in these urgent times to allow counties on a smaller scale to demonstrate how stronger laws could work. On Kaua'i, I have worked with citizens, representatives of the solar water heating industry and the county building division which administers building permits to create a bill for an ordinance which requires solar water heating on all new single-family and duplex housing. In lieu of a solar water heater, it also allows any water heating technology which will not exceed the carbon loading standards of a solar water heater. It also includes a few basic standards for installation that will maintain the quality of such installations. In a fair and rationale way, with a tight nexus, our bill will achieve the purposes that we all want to achieve: reduction of green house gases, movement toward energy independence, job creation, keeping money in our local economy and stimulating green innovation with based on clear carbon loading standards. Allowing counties to pass a stronger law is a very important; without that provision, bills like the one we have developed on Kaua'i cannot even be considered.

Mahalo nui loa.