

Life of the Land

Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono

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COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Robert N. Herkes, Chair

Rep. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 29, 2009

2:00 pm

Conference Room 325

HB 619 RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES

COMMENTS

The bill states: "The public utilities commission shall prepare a study on the feasibility of establishing renewable energy zones that are free from regulation by the public utilities commission."

(1) Current law and regulation permit independent electric utilities to exist on all islands. If established they would be regulated by the PUC.

(2) The PUC's jurisdiction covers only public utilities and thus this proposed law goes beyond their responsibilities: HRS §269-6 General powers and duties. (a) The public utilities commission shall have the general supervision hereinafter set forth over all public utilities, and shall perform the duties and exercise the powers imposed or conferred upon it by this chapter.

(3) The PUC has no expertise in renewable energy zones

(4) Energy zones could include anywhere there is wind, sun or ocean waves. One obvious renewable energy zone are rooftops. Electric coops could set up a public utility consisting of rooftop wind and solar and sell energy to building businesses.

Greenpeace hired KPMG (HEI's auditor) to do a study in The Netherlands which found rooftop solar could provide a quarter of that countries electrical needs. (Langman M. and Van der Sman M. (1999) Solar Power: from perennial promise to competitive alternative KPMG Bureau voor Economische Argumentatie, the Netherlands.)

Henry Curtis