

SB 266



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LATE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 3, 9:30 A.M.

(Testimony is 2 pages long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 266, SD1

Aloha Chair Kim and Members of the Committees:

The Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, with 5500 dues paying members statewide, supports the intent of SB 266, establishing a global warming task force to assess the impacts of climate change on Hawai'i. We believe it would be wise preventative measure for the State to establish a task force that is focused solely on examining the potential impacts of global climate change and Hawaii's adaptation needs. Clear deliverables from the task force—in terms of proposed legislation, rule changes, resource needs, etc—are needed for the work of the task force to be effective. Establishment of a climate change adaptation task force would be a welcome complement to the existing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Task Force. This other Task Force solely focuses on mitigating Hawaii's contribution to global climate change.

Global climate change is perhaps the greatest threat to Hawaii's prosperity. The ongoing increase in global greenhouse gas emissions—primarily from fossil fuel combustion—has systematically increased the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This increase in greenhouse gases is causing a warming of the Earth, leading to dramatic changes in climate, sea level, and weather.

Global climate change threatens Hawai'i with stronger hurricanes, prolonged drought, shifting weather patterns, warmer temperatures, shifting micro-climates, increased spread of invasive species, and saltwater intrusion into Hawaii's aquifers. University of Hawaii experts have demonstrated that a one meter rise in sea level—a change that is possible within the next 50 years—would inundate much of Hawaii's coastline, including its beaches, the world renown Waikiki resort area, the Honolulu International Airport's reef runway, the majority of Hawaii's wastewater treatment facilities, many historic sites, and many populated areas, including lands up to a mile

away from the existing shoreline in parts of Honolulu. The image on page 2 of this testimony demonstrates the extent of flooding through the Waikiki-Moiliili-McCully areas that would likely be caused by a one-meter rise in sea level.

We do suggest reexamining the composition of the Task Force. We suggest reducing the number but attempting to keep an appropriate balance of environmentalists and scientists in the process.

Finally, we note that HB 1271 may provide an appropriate funding mechanism for this task forced. It proposes to fund energy independence and food security by way of a \$1.00 tax on each barrel of oil. One of the principle causes of global climate change is the use of fossil fuels. Turning the source of our problem, oil, into a potential mechanism for creating a solution seems like an appropriate and suitable nexus.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

