



NATURAL ENERGY LABORATORY OF HAWAII AUTHORITY

An Attached Agency of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, State of Hawaii



Statement of
RON BAIRD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority
before the
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION,
BUSINESS & MILITARY AFFAIRS**
February 4, 2010
8:00 a.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 312

in consideration of

HB 2058
RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY

Chair McKelvey, Vice-Chair Choy, and members of the House Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business & Military Affairs, I am Ron Baird Chief Executive Officer of the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority, located in Kailua-Kona on the great island of Hawaii.

HB 2058 amends the definition of the term "concession" to remove telecommunication operations or locations therefore from the procurement code. This is logical, as the authority, agency, department that has control over a specific location should rightfully be the grantor of use of the location. As revenue from the operator of a telecommunications facility represent income, not expense, it is logical serve all interested parties not just one.

As NELHA continues to strive for self-sufficiency as it has been mandated to accomplish, yet providing tenant subsidies to help keep companies in business and expand, it needs every revenue source possibly available to it. Verizon has operated a cell phone tower at NELHA for many years as the NELHA location is one of the very best in west Hawaii for such an endeavor, providing a clear wide range of access. The revenues from this activity literally require no labor on NELHA's behalf, unlike the intensive 24/7 seawater delivery operation for aquacultural tenants. With a staff half the size it was a few years ago, a seawater delivery system twice as large and with twice as many tenants, NELHA has and does appreciate the Verizon operation.

NELHA has been approached by four or five other cell phone operators wanting to locate towers at NELHA. However, the current definition of concession has made it impractical with our small staff to pursue these "revenue-with-no-cost" potential sources. The amended definition proposed in HB 2058 will definitely simplify and facilitate the development of this positive revenue source.

NELHA supports the passage of this Bill into an Act as NELHA believes its passage and implementation will make a significant positive economic impact on the future of not just NELHA, but other authorities and agencies, the state and its well-being.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my testimony and if you have any questions, I would be happy to take and answer them now to the best of my ability.