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Bill No. 2971

Support Y N

Date 2/1

Time 9:12

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Statement of
THEODORE E. LIU
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Tuesday, February 2, 2010
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HB 2971
RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITY SITING PROCESS.

Chair Morita, Vice Chair Coffman, and Members of the Committee.

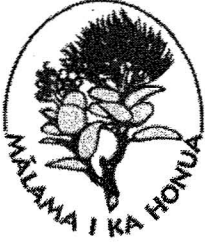
The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) opposes HB 2971 as written because is it vague and ambiguous. The bill as written would require the energy resources coordinator to include "representatives" from the island where a renewable energy facility is proposed to be included in determining terms and conditions of the permit plan, and would add community benefits agreements as subject to determination by government agencies, applicant, and residents.

DBEDT opposes HB 2971 because "representatives from the island" is not clearly defined. DBEDT recognizes the utmost importance of community involvement in the renewable energy facility siting process, as well as the critical role the community plays in the negotiation of community benefits agreements. DBEDT recommends amending the current language in the bill

by replacing “community representatives” with “legislative representatives from the districts where renewable energy facilities are proposed.”

DBEDT also opposes HB 2971 because it is inappropriate for DBEDT, as a third party, to negotiate or make determinations on community benefits agreements between communities and renewable energy facility developers and/or utilities. DBEDT recognizes the utmost importance of community benefits attached to renewable energy facility development.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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Bill No. 2971
Support Y N X
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

February 2, 2010, 8:30 A.M.

(Testimony is 2 pages long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2971 WITH A PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Aloha Chair Morita and Members of the Committees:

The Hawai'i Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 2971, which requires the energy resource coordinator to work with representatives of the impacted island when considering and permitting new renewable energy projects. As an amendment, we suggest the coordinator's role should also include facilitating a minimized impact on the environment. Specific language is suggested below.

Large-scale renewable energy development presents the challenge of new land-consumptive activities with potentially significant impacts on conservation lands. Without careful planning, significant areas of affected ecosystems may be fragmented, degraded and lost, along with the species that inhabit them. Large-scale renewable energy generating and transmission facilities can create and leave serious impacts on the land where they are sited. Some of these technologies require large amounts of land and minimize or eliminate the possibility of other ecosystem functions where they are sited both in the present and the future as well. Other technologies may impact complete ecosystems less but have significant impacts on certain species including native birds and bats.

The Sierra Club recognizes that global warming is the most serious environmental threat facing our nation and planet today. Having failed so far to make the significant, necessary changes to curb global warming, we face a planet-wide crisis of almost unfathomable proportions. Therefore, we must act quickly and decisively to reduce carbon emissions through a revolution in energy systems. Failure to turn this tide threatens much of the conservation work we have done for over a century. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, business as usual -- climate change combined with overuse of resources and direct destruction of habitat -- will result in the loss of up to one-third of all species on earth by the end of this century.

Recognizing that some large-scale renewable energy projects will likely be developed on conservation or agricultural lands, we suggest the coordinator should attempt to ensure the siting of these facilities has the fewest impacts on ecosystems, air and water quality, and wildlife, and focus on protecting lands needed for ensuring habitat resiliency and wildlife migration corridors. The coordinator should also work with state and federal agencies to clarify the actual necessary

contribution of renewable energy from conservation lands. To this end, we propose a new paragraph on page 3:

- (8) Ensure the siting of renewable energy facilities has a minimized impact on ecosystems, air and water quality, and wildlife, and focus on protecting lands needed for ensuring habitat resiliency and wildlife migration corridors. The coordinator should also work with state and federal agencies to clarify the actual necessary contribution of renewable energy from conservation lands on each island.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.