

TESTIMONY
SB2532
LATE



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture
And Hawaiian Affairs
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by

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RE: Testimony in Support of S.B. 2532, Relating to Sustainability

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Tokuda and honorable members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2532, relating to sustainability. I am the director of the Social Sciences Public Policy Center ("Center") at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and along with Dr. Sharon Miyashiro have been working on updating the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan ("H2050 Plan"). As you recall, the state's H2050 Task Force developed the H2050 Plan that identified crucial areas for future planning to revitalize the state's economy, protect the environment, and preserve the culture and quality of life for future generations. This plan set in place an important long-term planning process for Hawai'i's future.

In 2008, the legislature adopted Act 225 that requested the Center to review the plan, consult with citizens and leaders from across the state to prioritize the goals and objectives in the Plan, and develop benchmarks for each of the major goals. The Center has completed its work and submitted its findings to the Legislature in January (see the report on our website, www.publicpolicycenter.hawaii.edu). Briefly, the report covers the following:

- ❖ Data gathered from email surveys and face-to-face cross-sector meetings in each county, with representation from 10 major sectors of our community--business, labor, the environment, kanaka maoli, youth, the military, the health sector, the non-profit sector, education and government (state and county level).
- ❖ developed a sustainability resource guide; and
- ❖ researched data sources and benchmarks.

The report proposed five major recommendations based on the voices of the community:

- ❖ **Incorporate the H2050 Plan definition of sustainability and its goals as a new section in Chapter 226, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.**
- ❖ **Develop and implement policies based on common themes heard across the state and counties in the cross sector dialogs.**
- ❖ **Support the continuing public-private collaborations, community discussions, activities, and work on sustainability efforts.**
- ❖ **Adopt measures of accountability, including data and data sources, indicators and benchmarks.**
- ❖ **Develop a sustainability coordinating entity to carry forward the H2050 Plan.**

S.B. 2532 addresses the first recommendation. It provides for a sustainability policy to be incorporated in the Hawai'i State Planning Act, Chapter 226, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. It puts into law the definition of "sustainability" that was adopted by the many thousands of citizens who provided input in the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan, i.e., "a Hawai'i that respects the culture, character, beauty, and history of the State's island communities, strikes a balance between economic, social and community, and environmental priorities; and meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." And further it provides seven guiding principles and five goals to achieve a sustainable Hawaii by 2050.

We believe it is extremely important to continue the progress being made towards Hawai'i's sustainable future by putting this sustainability policy into the Hawai'i State Plan.

We would like to suggest some technical amendments to the bill for clarification; and have provided those suggestions as a proposed draft as an attachment to this testimony.

S.B. NO. 2532

PROPOSED DRAFT

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. During the 2005 special session, the
2 legislature adopted Act 8, Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2005
3 (Act 8), to create the Hawaii 2050 task force to review the
4 Hawaii state plan and the State's planning process. The office
5 of the auditor was required to prepare and submit to the
6 legislature the Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan. In enacting
7 Act 8, the legislature expressed its belief that government is
8 responsible for resolving daily and immediate issues and public
9 needs, while providing guidance to assure a sustainable future
10 and outlook.

11 The creation of the Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan comes
12 as the State faces a growing number of pressing issues,
13 including the steady deterioration of public infrastructure, the
14 lack of affordable housing, a continued reliance on a service-
15 based economy, the vulnerability of Hawaii in a volatile global
16 energy market, possible interruptions in travel and to critical

1 food supplies, threats to fragile island ecosystems, ever-
2 increasing numbers of residents, and an increasing number of
3 visitors over the long-term. These issues all raise questions
4 about the long-term limits of growth in the State and motivate
5 the need to begin planning and action to assure Hawaii's future.

6 Clearly, a policy framework to establish sustainability as
7 a state priority and ensure a coordinated and coherent approach
8 to fulfilling the long-range vision for a sustainable Hawaii is
9 needed. The mission of the Hawaii 2050 task force and the
10 objectives of the Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan focus on the
11 revitalization of the State's long-term planning process to
12 better guide the future development of Hawaii. Addressing and
13 solving issues critical to Hawaii's way of life and natural
14 resources requires coordinated community efforts to produce
15 comprehensive, long-range planning policies and actions.

16 In 2008, the legislature adopted Act 225, Session Laws of
17 Hawaii 2008, asking the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of
18 social sciences public policy center to review the Hawaii 2050
19 sustainability plan and provide a definitive framework for
20 policy makers including defined data, data sources, and
21 benchmarks for each of the major goals.

22 The purpose of this Act is to implement the recommendations
23 of the Hawaii 2050 update report, commissioned by Act 225,
24 Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, to establish sustainability as a

1 state priority by adopting the Hawaii 2050 sustainability
2 definitions, guiding principles, and goals.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 226, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and
5 to read as follows:

6 "PART . 2050 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

7 **Findings and purpose.** In 2005, the legislature enacted Act
8 8, Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2006, to create the Hawaii
9 2050 task force to review the Hawaii state plan and develop
10 sustainability policies to address the vital needs of the State
11 through the year 2050. The office of the auditor was required
12 to prepare and submit to the legislature the Hawaii 2050
13 sustainability plan.

14 The task force developed a comprehensive sustainability
15 plan that included guiding principles and five major goals for
16 Hawaii 2050.

17 The purpose of this part is to set forth the Hawaii 2050
18 sustainability policy, which shall serve as a guide for the
19 future long-range sustainability planning of the state.

20 **§226-1 Definitions.** As used in this part, the following
21 words and terms shall have the following meanings unless the
22 context indicates another meaning or intent:

23 "Ahupuaa" means a traditional native Hawaiian resource and
24 behavioral management system that ensures respect for the air,

1 land, water, and other scarce natural resources that make life
2 sustainable from the mountains to the sea.

3 "Kanaka maoli" means native Hawaiians.

4 "Sustainability" is defined as a Hawaii that achieves the
5 following: 1) Respects the culture, character, beauty, and
6 history of the State's island communities; (2) Strikes a
7 balance between economic, social and community, and
8 environmental priorities; and 3) Meets the needs of the present
9 without compromising the ability of future generations to meet
10 their own needs.

11 **§226-2 Sustainability; guiding principles.** (a) Hawaii
12 residents desire a balance between economic, cultural, and
13 environmental concerns and priorities. Thus, sustainability in
14 Hawaii shall be established as the overall theme and guiding
15 principles of sustainability policy:

- 16 (1) To balance economic, social, community, and
17 environmental priorities;
- 18 (2) To respect and live within the natural resources and
19 limits of the State;
- 20 (3) To achieve a diversified and dynamic economy;
- 21 (4) To honor the host culture;
- 22 (5) To make decisions based on meeting the needs of the
23 present without compromising the needs of future
24 generations;

1 (6) To observe the principles of the ahupuaa system to
2 guide resource management decisions; and

3 (7) To emphasize that everyone, including individuals,
4 families, communities, business, and government, has
5 the responsibility for achieving a sustainable Hawaii.

6 **§226-3 Sustainability goals.** There are established five
7 goals that are designed to achieve a preferred future by year
8 2050, which shall include the following:

9 (1) A way of life in which living sustainably is a part of
10 daily practice in Hawaii;

11 (2) A diversified and globally competitive economy that
12 will enable residents to live, work, and play meaningfully in
13 Hawaii;

14 (3) Responsible and respectful use, replenishment, and
15 preservation of the State's natural resources for future
16 generations;

17 (4) A community that is strong, healthy, vibrant, and
18 nurturing, thus providing safety nets for those in need; and

19 (5) An environment where Kanaka maoli and island cultures
20 and values thrive and are perpetuated."

21 SECTION 3. In codifying the new sections added by section
22 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute
23 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating
24 the new sections in this Act.

1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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(END)