

Testimony before the Senate Committees on Energy & the Environment and Commerce & Consumer Protection

By

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Senate Bill 367, Relating to Renewable Energy

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Please accept my input in the spirit in which it is intended, with grace and inspiration to do the right thing for future generations of life.

The current planning process and proposal for the Lanai Wind project has at least 4 fundamental flaws:

- 1) Lack of Stakeholder engagement, empowerment and inclusion
- 2) Obsolete use of centralized power production model
- 3) Negawatts. First principles ignored: Conservation makes money, waste costs money
- 4) Unsustainable and possibly illegal

With 13 years as a systems engineer and as many years in community development and education, I believe my insight into these types of projects is unique. Naturally, I am opposed to poorly conceived projects.

1) As I responded to DBEDT inquiry in December 2009, engaging the community stakeholder in the initial stages of the design of these centralized projects is crucial to their success. Unless and until the project scope and scale are informed by all stakeholders to include the community and interested citizens, government and private project proposals will continue to run into resistance and even collapse.

For democracy to work and for projects to be completed in a sustainable manner, scope, scale and energy production design must incorporate systems thinking and systems based sustainability principles. The approach cannot be short-circuited or it will eventually fail. Communities are not and cannot be considered as pawns in a government-private interests chess game. Study after study has shown that to be sustainable, community stakeholders must be included as full participants. Sustainable decision-making cannot be rigged according to a certain set of outcomes.

I am opposed to both schemes for building out a wind farm on Lanai. My opposition is informed by my background in systems engineering and by a great deal of listening to stakeholders. In my view, the political-business axis that has proposed and continues to support this project has not shown a lot of common-sense. Nor has sustainable decision-making been used to make these decisions. Q: Why else would a human endeavor choose a community resistant path, one fraught with technical risk, moral hazard, restricted interests, and environmental degradation? A: Perhaps a lack of listening.

The late esteemed Stanford scientist, Dr. Stephen Schneider once said that "Democracy is a full-contact sport" and indeed the truism cuts both ways. It seems apparent that government and private interests continue to choose to exclude stakeholders from full participation by refusing to allow sustainable decision-making to develop resulting in over-hyped business plans and centralized planning schemes.

2) Further, as a result of a centralized power production model, the project will likely be technically obsolete within its design lifetime. If built as proposed, the project could destroy the millions of public investment dollars through abandonment. It uses the same old slash-and-build destruction of environmental assets and view-planes, while degrading the community spirit of Lanai.

But why do I say these things? First, take a clear look at the project risk factors. Why would the landowner/HECO partnership choose to offshore the risk to the rate/taxpayer if the project viable? If this project cannot stand on its own, why are the private interests that support it proposing to place the risks on the ratepayers? Why should the benefits of the project be shared with the private interest if the risks are assumed entirely by the ratepayer?

The one principle of sustainability that is being ignored in this proposal is decentralization. Despite the proposal's sponsors who have deep-pockets and special interests, decentralized power production will eventually become the grid base-load source of tomorrow. Massive power systems will become obsolete as more and more residences and commercial buildings come on-grid to generate power.

If decision-makers would simply take a systems view of power production instead of a project-by-project technology-by-technology approach, there would be a set of power generation solutions that would obviate the need for a massive centralized power generation project. According to the Rocky Mountain Institute, the biggest sources of future energy are negawatts or energy efficiency, smart systems and decentralized clean power. As I like to say in my community presentations, "There is enough power for all if we all generate power."

3) If all the money and resources that all parties are placing into this unsustainable project were instead directed into conservation education, energy efficiency programs, and decentralized power incentives, we would not need this project. It is well known that energy efficiency can save 30-90% of energy usage- NOW! Why are we proposing more energy production when we have not even tapped the richest source of energy we have, negawatts? The cheapest kilowatt is the one you don't use. It becomes available for use immediately and elsewhere on the grid. It has been proven time-and-again that conservation makes money, and waste costs money. It is proven that energy efficiency is the lowest hanging fruit of energy independence. It is an accepted rule of energy management that one should reduce energy usage before more energy production is added to the grid. The transformational case study of energy use in California over the last 40 years is proof of that.

4) It is likely the project proposal will be found to be illegal in a court of law via HEPA and NEPA. The legislation unsustainably restricts project design to wind production only. Reflect back on the poorly conceived legislation that doomed the Superferry for a case study in ignoring best practices and political arrogance. There are a whole set of solutions to draw upon that are cheaper and quicker at implementing than this risky waste of taxpayers monies.

In closing, may I generously suggest that each legislator this take some of my tax dollars and get an education in sustainable systems. HPU has several very good certificate programs and a masters program in Leadership and Sustainable development. Leverage the latest in sustainability education to help you make decisions according to system principles. How can you make decisions using the same processes, knowledge base, and politics that got us to this wasteful, risky, polluting situation and expect to get anywhere else but in another community resistant, environmentally unsustainable, and financially risky situation. How can we make decisions about sustainability without understanding sustainability?

Sincerely,

Rob Kinslow

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Conference room: 225
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: kevin killeen
Organization: Individual
Submitted on: 2/10/2011

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and members of committees. Distributed energy production would be better for more people and cost less.
Thank you for the opportunity to testify.