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LATE TESTIMONY

Statement of
JESSE K. SOUKI
Director, Office of Planning
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Tuesday, February 28, 2012
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
HB 2483 HD1
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the House Committee on Finance.

The Office of Planning (OP) supports HB 2483 HD1, which proposes to amend the Hawaii State Planning Act, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 226, by adding a climate change adaptation priority guideline to part III of the Act.

The purpose of this bill is to encourage collaboration and cooperation between county, state, and federal agencies, policy makers, businesses, and other community partners to plan for the impacts of climate change and avoid, minimize, or mitigate loss of life, land, and property of future generations. The bill is structured as a priority guideline to the State Planning Act, which falls under the jurisdiction of OP under HRS Chapters 226 and 225M.

OP views climate change as a serious threat to the State of Hawaii and its people, natural resources, economy, food and water security, and public infrastructure, and as such, we have found ways to help prepare the State of Hawaii for the impacts of climate change through its

planning functions, the Coastal Zone Management Program, existing mandates (such as the Ocean Resources Management Plan under HRS Chapter 205A-61), and with the support of county, state, and federal agencies and other stakeholders. While there are a number of climate change planning efforts on-going through various initiatives, we believe this measure will provide a solid policy foundation from which current and future planning efforts can be coordinated in a meaningful and effective way. Adding a climate change priority guideline to the State Planning Act will provide the basis for climate change considerations in all state and county planning, will provide the necessary authority for agencies to commit resources, and will provide a statewide framework with which to guide state and county agencies, as well as other stakeholders, on how to reduce Hawaii's vulnerability and increase resilience to the effects of climate change, and therefore be better prepared to adapt to the changing environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.