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Statement of
JESSE K. SOUKI
Director, Office of Planning
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, March 1, 2012
2:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
HB 2881, HD 1
RELATING TO GREENWAYS.

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

The Office of Planning (OP) supports the intent of HB 2881, HD 1, and appreciates the consideration of OP in implementing a statewide system of greenways and trails. However, we do not support Section 2 of the bill, and could support Section 3 of the bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

OP recommends deletion of Section 2, which proposes to establish a position within OP for a full-time statewide greenways and trails facilitator to implement statewide greenways planning and facilitation.

OP strongly believes that it is important to have further dialogue with relevant State agencies and county and community stakeholders as to the appropriate location for this position since it is critical to place the facilitator in an agency with programmatic functions and responsibilities that would complement and enhance the greenways facilitator functions. OP

does not have programs or functions of this nature, and we believe the facilitator—and thus, the program—would be much more effective if placed in a line agency.

OP supports Section 3 of the bill and believes the proposed greenways plan development process therein would be an appropriate vehicle for stakeholders to discuss and make recommendations as to the appropriate location for the facilitator position and funding requirements.

OP is willing to serve as the lead for the development of the statewide greenways plan pursuant to Section 3, provided that sufficient funding for consulting services to develop the plan is appropriated. OP does not have the budgetary or staff resources to undertake development of the statewide greenways plan without the appropriation of additional funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.