

LATE TESTIMONY

1065 Ahua Street
Honolulu, HI 96819
Phone: 808-833-1681 FAX: 839-4167
Email: info@gcahawaii.org
Website: www.gcahawaii.org



GCA of Hawaii

GENERAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

Quality People. Quality Projects.

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March 20, 2012

TO: HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVES COFFMAN, CHAIR,
DEREK KAWAKAMI, VICE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SUBJECT: **OPPOSITION TO S.B. 2873, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS.** Authorizes agencies to exempt certain secondary actions from the environmental impact statements law. Requires that applicants proposing certain actions identified in the environmental impact statements law prepare environmental assessments. (SB2873 HD1)

HEARING

DATE: Tuesday, March 20, 2012

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 325

Dear Chair Coffman, Vice Chair Kawakami and Members of the Committee:

The General Contractors Association (GCA) is an organization comprised of over six hundred (600) general contractors, subcontractors, and construction related firms. The GCA was established in 1932 and is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year; GCA remains the largest construction association in the State of Hawaii whose mission is to represent its members in all matters related to the construction industry, while improving the quality of construction and protecting the public interest. GCA **opposes** S.B. 2873, SD1, HD1, Related to Environmental Impact Statements, and respectfully recommends reinstating the original language of the bill, S.B. 2873.

Senate Bill 2873, SD1, HD1 proposes to establish a new discretionary approval process, which does not maintain an exemption for secondary actions, including, but not limited to various utility connections, like waterlines, wastewater lines, gas lines, gas facilities, electrical, communications, telephone and cable television utilities.

In 2009, The Department of Transportation, the Office of Environmental Quality Control and other interested stakeholders worked to pass Act 87, which provided an exemption for secondary actions. Since then, Act 87 has helped relieve agencies from conducting environmental assessments when the agencies have not proposed the action. Act 87 (2009) was adopted to prevent unnecessary delays for secondary actions that would be clearly exempt from environmental assessment requirements, such as an installation of a utility line across a public right-of-way.

The current version of S.B. 2873, SD1, HD1 proposes to do just the opposite of what Act 87 (2009) set out to accomplish; and instead makes the process of obtaining a secondary action approval, discretionary which may delay both state and private projects by creating another layer of approval requirements. S.B. 2873, SD1, HD1 will create a new discretionary approval process and further hamper the requirements toward developing projects.

For these reasons, GCA **opposes** the current version of this bill and **respectfully requests that this Committee replace contents of this bill with the original contents of S.B. 2873, which would make exemptions to abovementioned secondary actions permanent.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.