



THE OFFICE OF
Senator Malama Solomon

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

MEDIA ADVISORY
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MEDIA CONTACT: Caroline Julian/586-6261
The Office of Sen. Malama Solomon/toll free 974-4000 ext.67335

Senator Malama Solomon: “We’ve Made Significant Progress...”

HONOLULU -- “I believe we’ve made significant progress on many fronts for our community, island and State,” said Senator Malama Solomon, as she wraps up her second year as Governor Abercrombie’s appointee, representing District 1 (Kohala, Hamakua and Hilo). The 2012 Legislative Session ended on May 3.

Realizing that our State is heavily dependent on imported oil, Senator Solomon introduced several measures relating to alternative energy, intending to help bring down the cost of electricity. The following bills made it through the Legislative process and are awaiting the Governor’s consideration:

- Changes the Hawaii State Planning Act to include the development of geothermal energy resources on State Land.
- Amends the Hawaii State Planning Act to include promoting the development of geothermal energy resources that are located on State Land as a source of firm power to reduce the cost of electricity.
- Adopts utility and regulatory practices that will help ensure that Hawaii utilities are regulated by policies that are up-to-date, streamlined, subject to current information technology standards, and are transparent.

“The cost of electricity in the State of Hawaii is the most expensive in the nation. However, geothermal energy has proven to be an effective source of firm power energy. Therefore creating an environment that uses geothermal production will help save money for Hawaii residents,” said Senator Solomon.

While our economy is showing signs of stabilization, our unemployment rate is still high. The construction industry has been particularly hit hard during the recession. Senator Solomon has supported initiatives that would stimulate our economy and create jobs. In order to jump-start the economy, the Governor released \$165M to fast-track long needed upgrade and repairs that will put people back to work:

- Lower Hamakua Ditch Watershed Project. Pa’auilo Rending Plant & Slaughterhouse. Installation of a Hydropower plant as part of the Waimea Irrigation System. Waimea

rubbish transfer station improvements. Waimea and Hilo Baseyard—Wastewater improvements.

- UH Hilo—Student Housing at University Village. UH Hilo—Living Learning Community, Hawaii Community College—Update the long range development plan. Palamanui West Hawaii Community College Campus.
- Capital Improvement Projects for Public and Charter Schools all over the island.
- Hale Ho‘ola Hamakua Hospital — repair and maintenance. Kona Community Hospital- Planning and upgrade projects for design and construction and installation of two new generators.
- Arc of Hilo for the construction of Client Support Services Community and Training Center.

Senator Solomon also supported measures that the Senate put forth in modernizing our information technology infrastructure:

- Broadband initiatives to improve services on neighbor islands so every citizen has access. Enhanced communications to improve business opportunities.
- Modernizing the information technology for the Department of Human Services— reducing fraudulent claims resulting in taxpayer savings.

“The internet has made it possible for people to have access to information from all over the globe. As part of the broadband initiatives, I supported enhanced internet services that will help improve connection to the neighbor islands so every citizen has access to help businesses expand their connections globally,” said Senator Solomon.

As a third generation farmer-rancher, Senator Solomon is deeply committed to the preservation and perpetuation of agriculture, which is rooted in our State’s heritage and future. She was involved in the following measures related to agriculture:

- In 1994, Senator Solomon introduced a bill that became Act 264, establishing the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). In 2011, she co-sponsored a bill, which was also signed into law, which would establish the Public Land Development Corporation (PLDC). Both laws bring together private and public sector participants to form an alliance that will bolster economic recovery, promote recreational activity in such areas as the Honokohau Harbor and revitalize tourist destinations such as Banyan Drive in Hilo.
- Senate Resolution 46 (Solomon) passed in 2011, requests the Governor to ensure that Chief Procurement Officers comply with the Hawaii Procurement Code preferences to buy local products, promote the growth of the State's agriculture business and assure food safety and sustainability for Hawaii.
- A bill introduced by Senator Solomon that relates to public land was signed into law. It requires the Department of Land & Natural Resources to establish a public lands information system and database.

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When it comes to advancing Native Hawaiian rights, Senator Solomon supported several measures. A couple has been enacted into law:

- The Native Hawaiian Recognition Bill was signed into law in 2011. This historic law, co-sponsored by Senator Solomon, is another step towards the federal recognition of Native Hawaiians.
- Act 15, which resolves ceded land claims with the Office of Hawaii Affairs was signed into law on April 11, 2012. This settlement has no effect on claims related to sovereignty, or claims related to ceded lands receipts after July 2012.

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