February 7, 2013

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Public Hearing: February 7, 2013, 9:00am, Room 325

Re: HB 1363, Relating to Community Renewable Energy

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the Committee,

I am in support of HB 1363 that removes a substantial barrier to the advancement of renewable energy in the state of Hawaii.

I have been developing commercial renewable energy systems for three years, have an MBA from University of Hawaii, and am the Chair of the Surfrider Foundation Oahu Chapter.

Renewable energy systems such as photovoltaic "solar" are grid tied, and therefore the exact location of a solar system should not be an impediment to an individual or community being able to benefit from solar (or other forms of renewable energy). This bill will allow solar systems to be placed in areas where the cost/benefits are maximized. Homeowners who live in low sun areas or do not have a suitable roof space for solar panels will now be able to participate in solar investments helping Hawaii meet its clean energy initiatives and create more jobs and revenue to the state. There will be an increase in placing renewable energy systems in optimal areas and fewer placements in areas where the benefits are not maximized. Further, collective large systems cost less to install than multiple small systems.

Other states have already successfully launched such programs and have established best practices as well as software and other management requirements. The extra management of such a program should not be a reason to deny this opportunity to condo owners and many others who will benefit largely from this program. While I am not a technical expert, I believe that the evaluation of grid tied installations through the current utility rules would not be much different, if at all different, than current studies to infrastructure through the review and interconnection-resource studies facilitated by HEI.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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