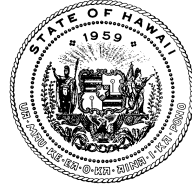


**LATE**

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
P.O. Box 3378  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**House Committee on Finance**

**SB 1339 SD1, RELATING TO RURAL AREAS**

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.**  
**Director of Health**

**April 1, 2013**

1 **Department’s Position:** The Department of Health supports this measure to amend the Hawaii Revised  
2 Statutes to create a state definition of Hawaii’s rural areas for the purposes of qualifying these areas to  
3 be eligible for federal rural programs and funds.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** None to Department of Health.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill will help protect existing programs that maintain valuable health  
6 care services to their communities, such as Kahuku Medical Center’s critical access hospital  
7 designation, and keeps areas of Oahu that are widely considered eligible for federal rural health  
8 programs, such as the Rural Health Outreach Initiative and the Rural Network Development Program.  
9 Programs such as these help to ensure a remote community’s access to primary and emergency care  
10 services. Furthermore, it permits the Department of Health’s Office of Primary Care and Rural Health to  
11 continue to provide technical assistance to these communities using their federal rural funding.

12 Federal rural programs recognize that states have better understanding of its geography and  
13 demographics, and are in a better position to define their rural areas. The Department believes this  
14 definition is equitable and captures the public understanding of what constitutes rural areas in Hawaii.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.