

SB 1339

RELATING TO RURAL AREAS

Creates a state definition for a rural area for purposes of federal programs only so that certain areas that would not otherwise be considered rural pursuant to a federal definition will be eligible for federal funds designated for rural areas.

WTL/AGL, WAM

Written Testimony Presented Before the

WTL/AGL

January 31, 2013, 2:00 p.m.

by

Stephany Vaioleti, Administrator, Kahuku Medical Center

SB 1339 Relating to Rural Areas

Chair Solomon, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kouchi and members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land and Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill, SB 1339. This bill is to establish a definition of rural that would protect existing programs in remote areas of the State, such as the critical access hospital program in Kahuku, and expand opportunities for other communities that are perceived as rural within the State but no longer meet federal definitions to qualify as such.

It is critical that this State definition be made as the 2010 Census data shows otherwise. The state-designated rural area would designate areas of the state as rural and allow for communities so designated to qualify for federal rural funds and programs that recognize state-designated rural areas. The critical access hospital (CAH) program of which Kahuku Medical Center relies on is such a program.

Kahuku Medical Center plays a vital role in addressing the healthcare needs of the Koolauloa and North Shore communities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.