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Testimony of
LEIMANA DAMATE, Executive Director

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Monday, April 4, 2016
2:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1853 HD 2
RELATING TO SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS TO ASSIST BIOENERGY HAWAII,
INC.

The Aha Moku supports the passage of H.B. 1853, H.D. 2 which extends the authorization of the issuance of special purpose revenue bonds to BioEnergy Hawaii, LLC, for the purpose of establishing a cogeneration facility and related energy production facilities, for an additional five years.

This project is proposed to be located in the Northwestern area of Moku O Keawe, the Island of Hawaii. Once fully operated, it will serve the communities and residents of two moku, Kohala and Kona in West Hawaii. Currently, the ahupua'a communities of Kona-Kohala suffer some of the highest energy rates in the State. Many of our ahupua'a resource practitioners must also work two jobs to survive the high cost of living in Hawaii now. A large part of that unavoidable expense is the need to use energy in their households.

Upon learning about BioEnergy, and studying their project and long-term plans, we believe that this process can help our people meet their needs in the area of self-sufficiency and energy. If these needs are recognized and met, the ability to integrate traditional and generational resource methodology into current regulatory policies, which is a mandate of the Hawaii State Aha Moku, can be done easier and more efficiently.

The directors of BioEnergy have indicated their willingness to work with the communities of Kona and Kohala in understanding their specific needs and to initiate discussion on BioEnergy's footprint on the land. This footprint is believed to be nominal considering the good that is anticipated for the ahupua'a communities of the Kona and Kohala Moku.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue and we ask that this committee support its passage.