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Statement of
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Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Friday, April 12, 2019
2:20 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room #224

In consideration of
HCR 55, HD1
**REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CONSOLIDATION OF STATE ENVIRONMENTAL FUNCTIONS
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT.**

Chairs Gabbard and Thielen, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Inouye, and Members of the Committees. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports** HCR 55, HD1, which requests the Governor to convene a Department of the Environment and Consolidation of State Environmental Functions Working Group. The working group is requested to consider and make recommendations on consolidating the functions of all the existing state departments, divisions, agencies, and offices that are designated to address environmental issues into a single Department of the Environment.

DBEDT notes that creating a new department takes careful planning and consideration of not only the employees, but also budgetary issues. A working group convened to make recommendations on a new Department of the Environment, with members representing potentially affected departments, divisions, agencies, and offices, would ensure consideration is given to each organization's respective interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

April 12, 2019 2:20 PM Room 224

In SUPPORT of HCR 55 HD1

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Thielen, and members of the committees,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **supports HCR 55 HD1**, requesting the Governor to convene a working group to make recommendations on the consolidation of state environmental functions and the establishment of a Department of the Environment.

The Sierra Club supports creation of a working group to explore a new "Department of Environment" for the state of Hawai'i. While we understand the Legislature might have reservations to expanding government, we believe that it would be beneficial to combine the existing state agencies dealing with environmental issues into a new agency that is streamlined, transparent, and action-oriented.

O'ahu voters passed a Charter Amendment to establish a Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency in 2016. In the past two years, this new office has brought together the Honolulu City Council, administrative agencies, community members, and other important stakeholders to advance a variety of environmental goals relating to climate change and resiliency. Recognizing the success of this office, there were discussions in Maui County to consider a similar charter amendment for Maui County voters. Through the creation of a State Office of Environment, Hawai'i can have even more of an impact and continue our leadership in climate change and sustainability efforts.

We believe the formation of a Department of Environment will help to facilitate discussion about the impacts of climate change, breakdown departmental silos, and initiate sustainability and clean energy projects that will encourage conservation jobs, stimulate our economy, and protect our shared resources for future generations.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HCR 55 HD1**.

Mahalo,

Jodi Malinoski, Policy Advocate