

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 , 2020

RE: H.B. No. 2624
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2020
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, to which was referred H.B. No. 2624 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish an Environmental Impact Statement Information Hub within the Office of Environmental Quality Control (Office) to provide information, such as upcoming hearings, periods for comments, and summaries for pending Environmental Impact Statements.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Young Progressives Demanding Action and four individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of Environmental Quality Control.

Your Committee finds that transparency is important to the public regarding the approval and permitting processes for construction and other projects that may impact the environment. The public is often unaware of a pending project until after a decision is made on an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, at which point the time for public comments has passed. Increasing public participation and awareness of projects prior to acceptance of the environmental assessment or



environmental impact statement will allow the public time to participate in the process. Improving the Office's website and highlighting the projects still open for public comment will allow the public to participate in the process.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Incorporating the proposed language into section 343-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, rather than establishing it as a new section in Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (2) Removing references to the Environmental Impact Statement Information Hub and clarifying that the Office shall establish, implement, and maintain an interactive website that shall be accessible to the public at no cost;
- (3) Amending the functionality of, and required notifications and information to be provided through, the website;
- (4) Removing the second year of the appropriation and making the release of funds contingent upon the Office consulting its stakeholders regarding establishment of the website;
- (5) Changing the expending agency for the appropriation to the Department of Health;
- (6) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2624, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2624, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Energy &
Environmental Protection,


NICOLE E. LOWEN, Chair



