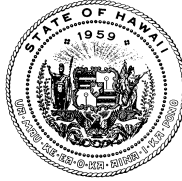


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Testimony COMMENTING on HB2624
RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE TINA WILDBERGER, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Keith Kawaoka
Acting Director, Office of Environmental Quality Control
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 4, 2020
8:30 a.m.

Room Number: 325

1 **OEQC's Position:** The Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC), an attached agency to the
2 Department of Health which administers Chapter 343, Environmental Impact Statements, Hawai'i
3 Revised Statutes (HRS) would like to provide comments and address some concerns on HB2624. We
4 appreciate the intent provided that its enactment does not reduce or replace priorities within the
5 Administration's executive budget.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** Primarily, the bill would establish within OEQC an Environmental Impact
7 Statement Information Hub responsible for providing information on various identified aspects of
8 pending Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Presently, pursuant to Chapter 343, HRS, the OEQC
9 publishes a periodic bulletin (called *The Environmental Notice*) twice each month that contains, amongst
10 other things, essentially all the information identified in this bill. Issues of this bulletin are available on
11 the OEQC website and are regularly emailed to over 1000 subscribers, who can sign-up on the OEQC
12 website.

1 As indicated, the website and *The Environmental Notice* contains additional information and documents
2 regarding the environmental review process in Hawaii. In particular, this process provides that many
3 more Environmental Assessments (EA) are prepared than a very detailed EIS. This bill only addresses
4 projects undergoing the EIS process, while the OEQC website contains substantial detail and information
5 on both EAs and EISs.

6 The bill infers that the separate Environmental Council (EC) makes decisions on EAs or EISs. Actually,
7 neither the OEQC nor the EC has authority to make determinations on individual EAs or EISs. Such
8 determinations are made by various State or county agencies that are either proposing or approving
9 actions that trigger Chapter 343 HRS review. In the case of EISs, the Governor or relevant mayors have
10 the authority to determine the acceptability of a Final EIS.

11 Accordingly, OEQC publishes information about a pending EA or EIS at the request of the relevant
12 agency or authority. The OEQC always directs that public comments are to be addressed to those
13 agencies with authority. However, currently, not all agencies may be prepared to receive comments online
14 as typically, comments are directly received by agencies via email or postal mail.

15 The OEQC acknowledges there is always room for improvement in how the website presents the
16 information, and within tight staff and budgetary limits, strives to continually enhance the website's
17 attributes. OEQC will continue to explore means of improving the website and highlighting projects still
18 open for public review. However, the establishment of a new digital platform to receive online comments
19 for all the various State and county agencies will require a substantial modification of the way OEQC and
20 all these agencies/stakeholders engage in the process.

21 Currently, a model is evolving where individual agencies occasionally are hosting such online platforms
22 on a case-by-case basis for individual actions and receiving online comments in this manner seemingly
23 helps keep comments organized for each agency's actions. The bill appears to direct OEQC to receive,
24 organize and disseminate all comments for all actions across all agencies. This would be challenging and

- 1 problematic, especially since OEQC has no authority or control over the ultimate consideration of these
- 2 comments and any subsequent responses to such comments.
- 3 **Recommendation:** OEQC would encourage further analysis and development of the evolving “agency”
- 4 model. Additional fiscal resources would be needed to accomplish what this bill proposes. OEQC would
- 5 appreciate the additional fiscal resources for this task, provided it does not reduce or replace priorities
- 6 with the Administration’s budget request.
- 7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2624

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 9:59:40 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/4/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jun Shin	Young Progressives Demanding Action	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2624

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 2:57:11 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/4/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Azuma Chrupalyk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We need all new and strongly educated people to fill these positions and govern it in full detail.

HB-2624

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 4:21:57 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/4/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen and Committee Members:

I strongly support HB 2624. As someone who has reviewed and worked on EIS documents that impact my community, it is imperative that everyone has easy access. These documents are for projects that could materially and potentially negatively impact a community.

HB 2624 creates a user-friendly website for Hawaii residents to find and track environmental impact statements

The current site is complicated to use, difficult to understand, and doesn't include a way for people to receive regular updates about issues they care about or to receive notifications about when hearings are taking place.

Please support more transparency and access for our community.

Malama aina,

Kathleen Pahinui, Waialua, Oahu

HB-2624

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 3:51:21 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/4/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Hinderer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HB-2624

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 6:50:58 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/4/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Theresa Sharman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2624

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 4:00:54 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/4/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for recognizing that the greatest source of frustration for those of us trying to follow the status of various EIS statements and for the need to have one central site to go to.