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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director, Office of Planning
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Tuesday, March 2, 2021
9:30 AM
State Capitol
in consideration of
SB 304, SD 1
RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee:

The Office of Planning offers the following **comments** on SB 304, SD1.

In accordance with [Act 16, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018](#), the Office of Planning investigated and recently published the "[Feasibility and Implications of Establishing a Carbon Offset Program for the State of Hawai'i](#)" on December 26th, 2019. The publication was electronically provided to the Hawai'i State Legislature and is also available at the Office of Planning's website.

The Office of Planning notes that sections 7.2 (pages 49-51) and 7.4 (pages 52-53) of the feasibility report describe the requirements of developing a potential carbon offset program for the State of Hawai'i.

The U.N. has declared this 2020-2030 decade as the "Decade of Action" to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in alignment with the goals of the U.N. Paris Agreement.

These international initiatives have significantly impacted markets and corporations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including Boeing's recent commitment to transition its commercial aircraft to be ready to fly 100% on sustainable aviation fuels by 2030.

The State of Hawai'i likewise established a strong foundation of greenhouse gas reduction policies through statutory targets to achieve a 100% Renewable Portfolio Standard, and enacting the state's commitment to a Zero Emissions Clean Economy, with both of these targets to be achieved by 2045.

Offsets are a specific implementation mechanism used to foster greenhouse gas reductions, but the uses are narrow.

Instead, the State of Hawai'i should build on its existing greenhouse gas reduction policies and programs to develop the most economically viable mechanisms to facilitate reaching the Zero Emissions Clean Economy target by the year 2045.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2021 3:13:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawaii	Comments	No

Comments:

To: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing SB304 SD1 RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS.

Hearing: Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 9:30 a.m., Rm. 211 and by videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Position: COMMENT ON SB304 SD1– RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

The Climate Protectors Coalition is a group focused on reversing the climate crisis. As a tropical island State, Hawaii will be among the first places harmed by the global climate crisis, with more intense storms, loss of protective coral reefs, food insecurity, and rising sea levels destroying our shorelines. We must do all we can to reduce our carbon footprint and become carbon negative as soon as possible.

The Climate Protectors Coalition appreciates the intent of SB304 SD1, but is concerned that carbon offsets can be mere "feel good" greenwashing unless strictly verified. If there is an offset program, it should provide for the offset of 100% of air travel carbon emissions through a combination of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean mobility projects for communities, schools, and nonprofits (with a particular focus on lower-income areas and residents), in combination with terrestrial offsets such as tree planting and sustainable agriculture support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important bill! Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)



To: The Senate Committee on Ways and Means
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 9:30am

In strong opposition to SB304 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee members of Ways and Means,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly opposes SB304 SD1**

SB304 SD1 states the legislature finds that climate change is the most pressing issue of our time. 350Hawaii fully agrees. The planet faces an existential climate crisis and we must act now.

This bill also states the legislature recognizes that air travelers are “increasingly aware” of the climate change implications of their travel and seeks to use carbon offsets as an antidote to what some have termed “Flight shaming.” But while carbon offset schemes claim to compensate for emissions with no cost to the climate – they don’t actually do that, they are simply an accounting trick.

According to the UN IPCC report, if we are serious about averting catastrophic planetary changes, we need to reduce emissions by 45 percent by 2030. Trees planted today can’t grow fast enough to achieve this goal. A newly planted tree can take as many as 20 years to capture the amount of CO₂ that a carbon offset scheme promises. And during those decades we have to hope that this tree will survive the droughts, wildfires, and tree diseases that are occurring because of the global warming humans continue to cause by our on-going greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, new research shows that the Earth’s overheated climate will alter forests at a global scale. The study suggests that by 2040 forests will take up only half as much CO₂ from the atmosphere as they do now, if global temperatures keep rising at the present pace, and that trees will start to exhale more CO₂ than they can take in through photosynthesis.

Bottomline, carbon offsets are a distraction from the real solution to climate change, which is to reduce our carbon emissions. Offsetting simply allows companies like airlines to avoid taking meaningful action on their carbon emissions and to continue with their unsustainable behavior while shifting their responsibility for the climate onto the consumer.

If we’re serious about tackling climate change, there is only one answer to the problem: reducing our emissions. And that will mean moving away from a tourist economy to one that is more diversified and resilient.

Polluting industries have helped to “fuel” the denial that has enabled blocking any meaningful action to confront global warming. As a result, we have lost precious time and are now in the midst of a climate crisis. We cannot afford to waste more time on PR schemes. Our only recourse now is to act swiftly and boldly to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions lest we steal our children’s future. We must continue to do our part to avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 2, 2021, 9:30 A.M.

Video Conference

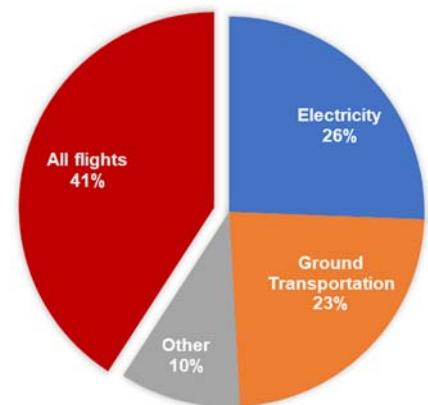
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 304 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

Blue Planet Foundation **supports SB 304 SD1, establishing a voluntary carbon offset program** for individuals traveling to or from Hawai'i by air. Such a program can help Hawai'i accelerate its carbon reduction goals while low-carbon alternatives for air travel are developed.

Aviation is Hawai'i's largest single source of carbon emissions (when international and round-trip flights are considered), comprising over 40% of the state's overall emissions, as shown in the chart below.¹ Until lower carbon alternatives to jet travel are commercialized, it makes sense to provide an option for travelers to offset their carbon emissions through a verified carbon offset program. Blue Planet believes that such a Hawai'i-specific program should provide for the offset of 100% of air travel carbon emissions through a combination of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean mobility projects for communities, schools, and nonprofits (with a particular focus on lower-income areas and residents), in combination with terrestrial offsets such as tree planting and sustainable agriculture support.

HAWAII'S CARBON EMISSIONS



Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

¹ Estimate of annual greenhouse gas emissions based on DBEDT Monthly Energy Trend data; EPA's eGrid data; the State of Hawaii's "Hawaii Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2015"; Hawaiian Airlines 2018 Annual Report; and other sources. Flight emissions include round-trip and international flights.