

**Senator Mike Gabbard***Aloha e Friends,*

The 2015 Legislative Session is well under-way! Many of you submitted ideas that have led to bill proposals that are now being heard. You can track the status of any bill here: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>. See the back page of my newsletter for steps on how to submit testimony. As always, please contact me at 586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov) if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter @senmikegabbard, Instagram @sengabbard, or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/senmikegabbard>.

*Mike***COMMITTEE CHAIR****Energy & Environment****MEMBER****Health****Judiciary & Labor****Higher Education & the Arts****District 20****Kapolei, Makakilo, and portions of Ewa, Kalaheo, and Waipahu****"Listen Story" Meeting**

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held February 28th at the Kapolei High School "Staff Lounge" (next to the cafeteria) from 9am to 10am.

**"Opening Day"**

Opening Day of the 2015 Legislative Session was January 21, and it was great to see so many of you come out for that! Be sure to check out the photos on my online photo album and Facebook page. We served out almost 150 plates of my wife's delicious homemade cooking, along with our renowned toffee. Thanks to all of you who took the time to come by and say hello.

**Legislative Priorities**

There are a lot of hot topics on the table this session. Some of my committee priorities for the 2015 session are:

- **Community-Based Solar**
- **Barrel Tax**
- **NextEra Transaction**
- **Energy Storage**
- **Invasive Species**
- **Industrial Hemp**
- **The Health Impact of Pesticides**

**Community-Based Solar**

I'm reintroducing a bill to establish a community-based solar program, which will direct the electric utilities to develop a community-based renewable energy contract for their customers. This would allow utility customers, such as homeowners, renters, businesses, and non-profits to collectively own or lease a solar array where they generate electricity, and in return they get a credit on their electricity bill. These projects can be easier for the utilities to interconnect to the grid, and they allow everyone to benefit more easily from solar power. This is great for folks in condos that don't have adequate roof space, or people who have shaded roofs, or who live on saturated circuits.

An added plus: in a community solar program, PV panels are installed at an off-site location that could be many miles from where a person lives. This allows all of us to help with circuit saturation by focusing new PV on the least-used circuits. I'm 100 percent behind getting a community-based renewables bill passed this session. This is a no-brainer that would help all the renters, non-profits and those without roof space to hui up on a piece of off-site land, buy as many solar panels as they like, and get a credit on their electricity bill.

**Barrel Tax**

In 2010, the Legislature increased the tax on the roughly 40 million barrels of oil we import each year from 5 cents to \$1.05. The idea was to put more funding toward energy and food security. Due to the downturn in the economy, the Legislature ended up taking off 60 cents of the tax increase for the General Fund. So right now, 15 cents, roughly \$3.3 million a year, of that tax goes to the State Energy Office for its important projects. We need to direct more of that 60 cents to energy. And we need to make sure that coal and gas are paying their fair share, so that we don't favor one fossil fuel over another. The original purpose of increasing the tax to \$1.05 in 2010 was to move us forward on energy and food security and these additional funds would help us accomplish those goals. The bill will also apply the tax to fossil fuels, including coal and natural gas.

## 100% Renewable Portfolio Standards

In its recent Power Supply Improvement Plan, HECO noted that they will easily surpass our renewable portfolio standard goal of hitting 40 percent by 2030. They are saying we can get to 65 percent by 2030. I want us to push the envelope further and have the goal of reaching 70 percent by 2035 and 100 percent by 2040. Our state has positioned itself as a national leader in moving forward with clean, renewable energy. Our energy portfolio standard goals are a big reason that's the case. We've heard from our electric utility that they can get way past 40 percent by 2030. Senate Bill 715 is how we can set the bar even higher.

## Invasive Species

Among the current threats are **Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles**, **Little Fire Ants** and **coqui frogs**. At a recent info briefing, Mark Fox, director of external affairs, The Nature Conservancy had this to say about Invasive Species in Hawai'i, "The greatest threats today are invasive plants and animals and diseases that are coming in and impacting our native systems, impacting our agriculture, impacting our quality of life that we experience here in Hawai'i." The fight against invasive species continues to be a top priority. I'm putting forth legislation that would direct additional funding to the Department of Agriculture for \$2 million and \$6 million to the **Hawaii Invasive Species Council** in the next two fiscal years.

## NextEra Transaction

The main purpose of this bill is to make sure that the NextEra transaction is in the public interest. This bill would establish a standard to evaluate a proposed merger, acquisition, or consolidation of an electric utility and require public hearings to enable public participation in the evaluation process. It directs the PUC to consider the following points as it relates to NextEra's (or any other potential buyers) application: affordability of electric service; safety and reliability of electric service; access to onsite generation and other options for customers to manage their energy usage; achievement of clean energy goals; and economic benefits to Hawaii. The bill also requires the PUC to ensure that NextEra is committed and has demonstrated the ability to expand customer energy options, including energy efficiency and distributed energy resources.

## The Health Impact of Pesticides

You may have seen the news recently regarding a bill I sponsored on the health impact of pesticides. The purpose of this legislation is to protect sensitive public resources of Hawaii from increased outdoor use of pesticides resulting from large-scale, outdoor commercial agricultural operations, to protect sensitive populations from the risks from exposure to increased outdoor use of pesticides and from pesticide drift and vapor from nearby commercial agricultural fields, to protect children from exposure to pesticides from outdoor applications on school grounds, and to preserve the right of Hawaii residents to reject pesticide exposure because of health, moral, or other concerns. The hearing for this bill is Thursday, February 12 3:00 PM in Room 414 of the State Capitol, and will include SB1037 and SB797, which also deal with the health impact of pesticides by requiring notice, reporting, and disclosure of pesticide use near sensitive areas. I'm pleased that we're hearing these important bills that seek to better regulate pesticide use in our islands. In addition to the big impacts that pesticides have on human health, we also have to focus on the damage that pesticides wreak on our lands and water supply. It's time for the state to take this more seriously.



Senator Gabbard's session staff: (L-R) Donna Lay, Asst. to Committee Clerk; Meg Turner, Office Manager; Manjari Fergusson, Legislative Assistant, and Rock Riggs, Committee Clerk and Chief of Staff.

## Industrial Hemp

The permit for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to begin growing hemp for research purposes was finally approved! I'm hopeful this year to extend this bill to allow for more growing of hemp (Senate Bill 375). You can track the progress of the bill here: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>. And if you don't know about this amazing plant, check out the article I wrote published in the *Honolulu Civil Beat* on December 19, 2014.

<http://www.civilbeat.com/2014/12/everybody-must-get-hemp/>

## Ulu (breadfruit)

I'm introducing a bill (Senate Bill 709) that was drafted in coordination with Dr. Failautusi (Tusi) Avegalio, the manager of the Pacific Regional Breadfruit Initiative. The bill would appropriate \$650,000 for fiscal year 2015-2016 for the research, development, marketing, and conservation of ulu. The funds would be expended by CTAHR.





## Check out the Island Pulse!

Ever wonder how much energy we're using right now in Hawaii? Check out the Island Pulse! This gauge reports how much electricity the island of Oahu and various communities on Oahu are using at any given time. It also graphs the source of the energy: How much is solar? Wind? Biofuels? Coal and oil?

Hourly data from HECO will be viewable on Island Pulse monitors at local establishments and online to help Hawaii residents see and understand our collective energy usage. Feedback is a critical step in comprehending the impacts of our energy use. Conditions that affect consumption trends may include weather, time of day, day of week, holidays, or other events.

Island Pulse charts will highlight current use and trends in eight neighborhoods and island-wide. These kiosks were recently put up by Blue Planet and are now at the Capitol. Pretty cool!



## Hawaii Hazards Awareness and Resilience Program (HHARP) Training Invite



Starting Feb. 19, in collaboration with the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (formally, State Civil Defense), the Honolulu Department of Emergency Management (DEM), and the Pacific Disaster Center, the Hawaii Hazards Awareness and Resilience Program (HHARP) is offering hazard awareness training. The goal is to build community

awareness and resilience to multiple hazards through facilitated education and outreach, while offering the tools and informational resources to guide mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The group meets once a month on the 3rd Thursday, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Ewa Beach Library, North Road, Next to Campbell High School. Throughout the course of HHARP Training, they want to identify and select volunteers to transition from the training to the Ewa Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee Working Group for HHARP and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) that will assist in preparing the community to resiliently respond to any hazard or disaster.



## Cowspiracy

I saw "Cowspiracy" this past fall when it premiered at Ward Theatre, but I'm not going to ruin it and tell you the plot line. In my view, it's an extremely important, hopefully, game changing film. It played a handful of times this past January. I hope you were able to go to one of the showings, and that after you watch the film, you'll reflect on how you can get involved in the process. To watch the preview, click [here](#). Or simply google "Cowspiracy trailer." I was invited to introduce the film at ProHub on January 9th.

## Judy Collins

Did anyone catch the Judy Collins concert on January 25<sup>th</sup> at the Mamiya Theatre? She gave an incredible performance to a packed house. I was thrilled to present her with an Honorary Certificate from the Hawaii State Senate. I thanked her for inspiring me as a young folk singer in the 60s to hitchhike from Florida to San Francisco, where I sang in coffeehouses in North Beach. At 75, her voice is amazingly pure, and her licks on 12-string guitar and piano were flawless.

## Lanikuhonua Hula and Canoe Festivals - February 27 & 28

Inspired by the spirit behind the hula festival, Campbell family members had an idea to adapt the festival concept for an annual Lanikuhonua canoe festival. In 2009, organizers created the Lauhoe O Lanikuhonua Canoe Festival as a non-competitive event to teach high school students already in paddling programs about the importance of the canoe to Hawaiians and Polynesians. "The Lei 'O Lanikuhonua Hula Festival is a festival to inspire this generation and generations to come; to ignite and excite students to preserve hula, language and *na mea Hawai'i* (Hawaiian things)."

For more information call (808) 674-3278 or email [lankuhonua@jamescampbell.com](mailto:lankuhonua@jamescampbell.com).

## How to Submit Testimony Online

*Anyone on a computer connected to the internet can use the Legislature's web-form to submit testimony.*

1. **Type up your testimony** and save it on your computer.
2. Go online (open your web browser) and **go to the Legislature's website: [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov)**
3. **Click on "Register" (upper right-hand corner of the page)** and enter your name, email address and the password you'd like to use for the website. Adding your organization and phone number is optional. If you've used the sign-in feature of the website before, skip to step 6. If this is your first time using the sign-in feature of the website, continued with step 3
4. Read the terms and conditions and then **click to agree to them.**
5. Go to your email account and open the email sent to you by the website, and **follow the instructions for confirming your account.** You're all set to go! Continue to step 6.
6. **Click on "Sign In"** (upper right-hand corner of the page) and enter your email address and password.

### **If you already have an email and password registered with the website:**

7. **Click on the "Submit Testimony"** icon located in center screen.
8. **Enter the bill number you're testifying on.** (Enter the prefix and the number, no draft numbers and no spaces. The hearing information (committee name, hearing room and date of hearing) will pop up. (If there's not a hearing scheduled for that measure, you won't be able to continue. Check to make sure you typed in spaces. For example, enter "HB123" rather than "HB 123 HD1 SD1.") the correct measure number.)
9. **Your name and email address will appear in the form.** Provide additional information such as whether you are testifying as an organization or individual, your position on the measure and whether you plan on being present at the hearing.
10. **Add your testimony.** Click on "Choose File" to find and select the document on your computer in which you've saved your testimony. (Alternative: If you'd like to submit your testimony in the body of the email, rather than attaching a file, just type your testimony into the "Additional Comments" box.)
11. **Don't forget to agree to the privacy terms before you click "submit"** to send your testimony on its way!
12. You'll get an email confirmation that it has been received.

## Upcoming Kapolei Public Library Events

The Kapolei Public Library will offer the following programs this month:

- *Romance Writers of America*, Aloha Chapter author panel: February 7 @ 10:30 am
- *One Man's Dream, One Woman's Reality*: the true story of a six year sailing adventure: authors Sharon Reed-Hendricks and Steve Hendricks: February 21 @ 1:00 pm
- The newest film in the National Endowment for the Humanities series Created Equal: *America's Civil Rights Struggle*: Freedom Summer will be shown followed by a discussion led by Mitch Yamasaki, historian at Chaminade University: February 24 @ 6:30 pm  
*For information about the events, please contact the library at 693-7050.*

