



To: The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023, 9:30am

In strong support of HR122/HCR117

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran, and Energy and Environmental Protection Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HR122/HCR117** which urges the counties to include townhomes in the residential permitting process for the installation of solar panels.

With the highest electrical rates in the country and the impacts of climate change already being felt, we need to move forward on smart solutions that will help to stimulate our economy and make us more resilient. The current system for processing permits is untenable and a detriment to Hawaii achieving our clean energy goals. In fact, many Oahu solar companies have stopped taking on townhouse clients due to the long wait for building permit approval from the Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting.

Rooftop solar power reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and as such, is a key tool in our fight against the climate crisis. We must remove the unnecessary roadblocks and burdens to installing solar systems so that all may access the benefits from solar energy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this very important resolution.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



Hawaii Solar Energy Association
Serving Hawaii Since 1977

Testimony of The Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA) Regarding HR122/HCR117, Urging the Counties to Include Townhomes in the Residential Permitting Process for the Installation of Solar Panels, Before the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran, and committee members:

The Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA) **strongly supports HR122/HCR117**, which urges the Counties to include townhomes in the residential permitting process for the installation of solar panels and suggests amending the resolutions to clarify that energy storage and solar hot water installations are also included.

HSEA members include the majority of locally owned and operated renewable energy companies doing business in the State and leading global cleantech manufacturers and service providers that invest and sell in our market. We employ thousands of residents in diverse green economy jobs that innovate, design, and build our path to a renewable energy future. We advocate for policies that help Hawaii achieve critical climate and resilience goals by enabling residents and businesses to invest in and benefit from the transition to clean energy. These investments provide resilient power that reduces energy burden for all and contributes to energy security and reliability as we decarbonize our economy and electric grid.

HSEA and other stakeholders have been working diligently for years with various county administrations at the leadership and departmental level to effect improvements in the permitting process. We continue to offer our assistance and expertise to fix issues with current systems and implement internal process changes. Townhome installations encounter significant challenges and delay because they are categorized as commercial. Including townhomes in the residential category and treating appropriately as residential retrofits will open up this segment to investment, improve permitting system efficiency, and allow townhome residents that have been essentially barred from participating, to benefit from clean, affordable, and resilient energy systems.

We recommend amending the resolutions to clarify the inclusion of energy storage and solar hot water systems.



Hawaii Solar Energy Association
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HSEA **strongly supports the sentiments conveyed in HR122/HCR117** and urges the committee adopt the resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

/s/ Rocky Mould

Rocky Mould
Executive Director

HCR-117

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 5:58:23 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/23/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Niklas Mecchi-Ericson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sustainable energy is near and dear to many resident's hearts-- please consider approving this bill to help meet Hawaii's clean synergy goals.

Bottom line: In effect, today no townhomes on Oahu can install solar panels due to permitting policies.

--Single family homes in Hawaii have a "pass-through" for permitting of solar panel installations due to federal law and they only require a residential permit.

--Hawaii requires townhomes to get a commercial permit to install solar panels.

--The DPP backlog is 1-2 years for a commercial permit.

--No solar companies on Oahu will even bid on homes requiring a commercial permit due to the lengthy permitting timelines. (I have personally contacted 3 companies)

Consequences:

-- Literally 1000s of townhomes cannot contribute to renewable energy, putting Hawaii's energy security at risk and endangering our islands' renewable energy of 100% clean energy by 2045.

--Hawaii residents will miss out on the federal and state tax incentives for solar installations (each year the percentage of tax incentives is dwindling). This results in \$1000s of dollars of increased cost for residents-- again,

this stunts the state's progress towards renewable energy as many will not be able to afford solar without the tax incentives.

--Local solar companies are missing out on the revenue (and job creation) of this significant additional pool of potential customers.

--Since we are often in hurricane season, I must mention that the addition of homes with solar and batteries would help to stabilize the energy grid and provide alternate means of power in the event of an emergency.

Potential Solutions:

--Fix the DPP backlog (unlikely in the near term).

--Adjust Hawaii policies so that townhomes can use residential permits for solar installations.

Our neighborhood, Hokuhoa in Kaneohe, has over 350 units alone and I invite anyone to drive through and see how few homes have PV panels. Our community is just one example of where people want to contribute to Hawaii's energy goals, fight global warming, and stabilize our

energy grid, but have our hands tied by Hawaii permitting policies and broken processes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Niklas Mecchi-Ericson