

TESTIMONY OF
LEODOLOFF R. ASUNCION, JR.
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII

TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

March 19, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

MEASURE: S.B. No. 3010, SD1 HD1
TITLE: RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY.

DESCRIPTION: Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to work with utility companies and other renewable energy developers on leasing processes to expedite the development of renewable energy. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

POSITION:

The Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) offers the following comments for consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to require the Department of Land and Natural Resources to work with utility companies and renewable energy developers on leasing processes for the development of renewable energy resources to achieve the State’s efforts to achieve its renewable energy goals. The Commission recognizes that more streamlined processes for planning, leasing, and permitting would promote the production of clean electricity and understands that generators of renewable energy play an important role in the State’s transition to renewable energy. Additional support on these issues could attract new and more developers to the state, which would lead to a more robust market and better outcomes for Hawaii’s residents.

The Commission observes that there may be items to address to further develop the State’s renewable energy resources and achieve the intent of this measure to facilitate the private sector’s attainment of renewable portfolio standards. The Commission respectfully defers to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to the implementation of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



To: The House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce (CPC)
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 2pm

Comments for SB3010 SD1 HD1

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org offers **comments and serious concerns regarding SB3010 SD1 HD1** that requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to work with utility companies and other renewable energy developers on leasing processes to expedite the development of renewable energy.

350Hawaii greatly appreciates the intent of this measure. However, we are concerned that it could potentially exacerbate emissions problems in our state, emissions that are currently ignored due to the state's flawed definition of "renewable energy."

While it is essential that the state quickly transition off of dirty fossil fuels, it is also essential that what we transition *to* are truly clean energy sources, sources that do not contribute to climate breakdown or local air pollution. Before expediting the development of renewable energy resources, we must first correct the critical errors contained within the definition of "renewable energy."

Case in point, burning biomass (typically trees) and trash incineration are considered renewable, despite that fact that these energy sources emit more harmful greenhouse gases than coal.¹ In addition, "hydrogen fuels derived primarily from renewable energy" are considered "renewable" ---*primarily* meaning also derived from fossil fuels, and ignoring the fact that hydrogen is a leaky gas that has a warming potential around 37.3 times greater than emitted CO₂ over a 20-year time period.²

¹ <https://www.energyjustice.net/files/biomass/woodybiomass.pdf> and <https://www.energyjustice.net/incineration/worsethancoal>

² <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-023-00857-8>

Last year was the hottest year in human history, and this year is expected to be even hotter. Scientists have reported that, for the first time, global warming has exceeded the 1.5C warming “limit” across an entire year.

In summary: **We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it.** If we don’ get our act together quickly and stop being swayed by greenwashing from corporations that care only about their profit margin, we will leave our children and future generations a world that is increasingly unhealthy and uninhabitable. Bottom line, we must stop putting carbon into the atmosphere. But that won’t happen with false climate solutions. Let’s clean up our definition of ‘renewable’ so we can truly take the actions required in a climate crisis, and move towards a safe climate and a better future for all. Our children are counting on us.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



**Testimony to
The Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
March 19, 2024
2:00 PM
Conference Room 329 & VIA videoconference
Hawaii State Capitol

SB 3010 SD1 HD1**

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and members of the committee,

Hawaii Gas **supports SB 3010 SD1 HD1**, which requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to work with utility companies and other renewable energy developers on leasing processes to expedite the development of renewable energy.

Since 1904, Hawaii Gas has been a pioneer in the gas industry. Hawaii Gas is again at the leading edge of our industry given our integration of both renewable natural gas (RNG) and hydrogen into our fuel supply mix and distributing it through our utility pipeline system. Hawaii Gas plays a vital role in Hawaii's energy portfolio by providing clean, reliable, and cost-effective energy to over 70,000 customers on all islands, all of whom depend on the company for water heating, cooking, drying, and other commercial and industrial applications. Hawaii Gas continues to look towards new, innovative, and economic ways to incorporate renewable energy sources while also reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

We believe that these amendments will significantly enhance the state's efforts to achieve renewable energy goals and promote sustainable development.

We urge you to support SB 3010, which will help accelerate Hawaii's journey towards a cleaner, more sustainable energy future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
March 19, 2024, 2: PM AM
VIA Video Conference & Conference Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol**

SB 3010 HD1

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee,

Hawaii Clean Power Alliance (HCPA) supports SB 3010 HD1, which requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to work with utility companies and other renewable energy developers on leasing processes to expedite the development of renewable energy.

Hawaii Clean Power Alliance is a nonprofit alliance organized to advance and sustain the development of clean energy in Hawaii. Our goal is to support the state's policy goal of 100 percent renewable energy by 2045. We advocate for utility-scale renewable energy, which is critical to meeting the state's clean energy and carbon reduction goals.

There are numerous challenges to securing land that has the resources, zoning and soils rating to develop utility scale renewable developments such as solar farms. The state's aggressive Renewable Portfolio Standards and decarbonization goals by 2045 requires that the state's limited land resources be optimized and balanced with the other policy goals of food production and housing. The state's land, which is under the authority of department of land and natural resources may offer some viable solutions that do not conflict with other policy goals.

This bill is a reinforcement of the state's commitment to renewable projects and helps to clarify and codify the important role that the department of land and natural resources is responsible for in helping expedite the development of these solar projects, not just planning and permitting, but the leasing aspect as well.

Once a lease is approved by their board, all other agencies such as the public utilities commission will be tasked with approval of the project, based on their statutory obligations to evaluate the project, and considering things such as cost and greenhouse gas emissions as it compares to fossil fuel generation

We ask the committee to pass this bill.