



**The Legislature  
STATE OF HAWAII**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **House and Senate Unveil Joint Majority Package for 2008**

**Honolulu.** Senate and House leaders today announced their joint majority package for the 2008 legislative session. The package is divided into three major areas: Energy and Environment, Affordable Housing and University of Hawaii Facilities Improvement. The significance of the joint package is that the included bills are considered to have state-wide importance and the commitment of the majorities of both chambers. Here is a summary of the proposals in the joint package:

### **ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

The major thrust of the energy environment measures is to make the maximum use of Hawaii resources to generate its own renewable energy in order to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels for the generation of electricity and for transportation. There is also a measure that would set energy efficiency standards for electric lighting. Each of these measures reduces the public's use of fossil fuels.

The environmental measures will help Hawaii consumers by giving them an increased number of locations where they can recycle bottles and cans, and by assisting them with the disposal of electronic equipment like computers and televisions. These measures will reduce the burden on Hawaii's landfills.

On the invasive species front, there is a joint measure to support the Department of Agriculture's strategic plan to fight invasive species. This bill would accompany Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) to support joint federal and state inspection facilities at the Honolulu International Airport and planning for joint harbor facilities.

1. Relating to Energy. This is a bill to create the position of "Energy Permitting Facilitator" within the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. This position would be in charge of coordinating and facilitating the permitting of renewable energy projects. The goal is to expedite permitting, but not at the expense of public input and environmental protections. The legislation would define the scope, basic

roles and appropriations for what would be, conceptually, an Energy Projects clearinghouse or one-stop permitting office. The cost would be about \$112,000 per year.

2. Relating to Solar Energy. This is a bill to allow photovoltaic energy production as a permitted use on all agricultural lands with a soil classification of "D" or below. There would be no cost to the state.

3. Relating to Agricultural Lands. This is a bill to allow for the development of renewable energy production facilities on agricultural lands. The use of the energy produced must be integrated with the core agricultural operation. There would be no cost to the state.

4. Relating to Electronic Device Recycling. This is a bill to create an E-Waste recycling program based on producer responsibility. Washington state and Connecticut are two state models. The bill would prohibit e-waste from going into the landfill, including computers, monitors and televisions. First year start-up costs are estimated at \$250,000. After the first year, producer fees are expected to pay for ongoing program costs.

5. Relating to the Deposit Beverage Container Program. This is a bill that requires retail stores in excess of 75,000 square feet to provide facilities for the acceptance of recyclable bottles and cans. The bill is intended for "Big Box" operations and not for regular supermarket operations. There would be no cost to the state.

6. Relating to Reorganization of State Agencies. This is a bill instructing the Legislative Reference Bureau to study the possible reorganization of the energy/environmental components of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism and other related state agencies into a more focused governmental structure. The scope of the study would also include the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) and the Hawaii Energy Forum. It would consider a possible cabinet level position, a new state department or a hybrid department. One time funding of \$75,000.

7. Relating to Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction. This is a bill to establish two positions to staff the Green House Emissions initiative approved in the 2007 legislative session. The initiative established state policy to reduce, by January 1, 2020, greenhouse gas emissions to levels at or below the estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for 1990. The cost would be \$135,000.

8. Relating to Lighting. This is a bill to set efficiency standards for electric lighting, to be called the Hawaii Lighting Efficiency Act. The Act develops a strategy for increasing the use of energy-efficient lighting, and effectively phases out energy-inefficient lighting, such as incandescent light bulbs, and especially those products with lead and high mercury content, over time. A similar bill in California has already passed. No long-term cost expected for the state.

9. Relating to the Environment. This is a bill to conduct a comprehensive review of Chapter 343 – the environmental review process. The review would be conducted by an

interdisciplinary team, headed by the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH). One time funding of \$250,000.

10. Making an Appropriation to fund the Department of Agriculture's Biosecurity Program to Fight Against Invasive Species and Pests in the State. Proposed funding of up to \$6 million for fiscal year 2008-2009.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The affordable housing component sustains ongoing commitments to support the development of much needed rental housing, affordable housing and homelessness programs.

1. Relating to Housing. This is an affordable housing omnibus bill. It appropriates funds for various homeless and housing programs and extends the sunset date for the allocation of a percentage the conveyance tax to the Rental Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) to June 30, 2013. It also assists developers in contracting for third party review, and authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds for public and affordable housing.

2. Relating to Kukui Gardens. This is a bill to appropriate \$26 million in General Obligation Bonds for the final purchase of Kukui Gardens. \$25 million was previously allocated in the 2007-2008 budget.

3. Relating to Rental Assistance. This is a bill to extend the time, up to six months, for finding qualified dwelling for rental assistance applicants. No cost to the state.

## **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII FACILITIES**

House and Senate majorities are committed to assisting the University of Hawaii with upgrading, repairing and maintaining their buildings and physical infrastructure. The University of Hawaii is one of the state's major assets. The condition of the campus facilities and services affects the educational experience for students and athletes and is a reflection of the state.

1. House and Senate are working on the exact funding amount and mix of revenue sources. It is top of the agenda but must be placed in context with other critical priorities.