



Bill No. 868

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

March 17, 2009, 8:30 A.M.

Room 325

(Testimony is 1 page long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 868 SD2

Chair Morita and members of the committee:

The Blue Planet Foundation supports SB 868 SD2, clarifying and further defining duties and responsibilities of the state energy office. We view this bill as a relatively straightforward housekeeping measure that provides more depth in defining the duties of the increasingly important energy office. Further, it also provides them with greater direction in examining the systemic changes necessary to transform Hawai'i to a clean energy future.

Blue Planet believes, however, that it may be time to consider elevating the level of energy planning and implementation in Hawai'i. If we are serious about ending our addiction to fossil fuel and seek to be powered by 100% clean, renewable, and indigenous sources, the government office charged with guiding the transition deserves greater standing and funding within state government. We would support the creation of a state Hawai'i Energy Security Authority (HESA), something akin to the existing Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA). HESA would be a stand-alone entity, tasked with all aspects of planning, permitting, and implementation of Hawaii's clean energy future. The Authority would be funded solely from a fee on each barrel of oil imported into the state; as dependency on oil decreases, so does the work of the Authority, and the budget decreases accordingly. Given Hawaii's energy independence the status, funding, and prioritization it deserves would help ensure that we achieve our clean energy goals.

Nonetheless, the simple changes in SB 868 SD2 are supported as an interim step.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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