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Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

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Strong support for SB 1671 No New Fossil Fuel Plants

I strongly support SB 1671, prohibiting the addition or expansion of any new fossil fuel burning facilities for electricity generation. Fossil fuels are simply not part of Hawaii's clean energy future. Hawai'i state policy should reflect our preferred energy future powered by clean, indigenous, renewable sources of electricity.

Hawai'i is the most dependent state in the nation on imported oil. Some 50 million barrels are imported annually, nearly 80% of which originate from foreign sources. In addition, over 805,000 tons of coal are imported into our state. These sources provide power for over 92% of Hawaii's electricity generation. The combustion of these resources also contributes over 23 million tons of climate changing greenhouse gas into our atmosphere annually. Hawaii's economic, environmental, and energy security demand that we reduce the amount of fossil fuel imported and consumed in Hawai'i.

Senate Bill 1671 addresses that need by prohibiting the permitting of future fossil fuel-fired electricity generating facilities in the state. To be clear, SB 1671 is not a prohibition on existing fossil fuel electricity generating facilities; it is prospective in nature, only addressing future projects. It exempts small (less than 2 MW) generators that are used for backup generation by hospitals and other emergency needs—an exemption that can be revisited by the legislature in the future as more capable storage technologies come online or indigenous biofuel sources become more readily available.

New fossil fuel facilities play no role in Hawaii's clean energy future. Please pass SB 1671 to help ensure that we stay on the right path for a sustainable Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.