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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

March 1, 2011

Mr. Allen G. Kam, Project Manager
Hawaii Interisland Renewable Energy Program: Wind
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
State of Hawaii
P.O. Box 2359
Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Dear Mr. Kam:

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON THE HAWAII INTERISLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM: WIND (HIREP) FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PREPARATION NOTICE (APPLICANT: STATE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM)

As the Lanai member on the Maui County Council, I would like to provide comments on the scoping of the subject HIREP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

As I understand, wind energy has been determined to be the most viable near term technology to meet the goals of the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative (HCEI), which is a partnership between the State of Hawaii and the U.S. Department of Energy. As proposed, facilities would be developed on Maui, Molokai, and Lanai to develop wind energy for transmission to the island of Oahu via undersea cable. I also understand that the Applicant is preparing this programmatic-level EIS to facilitate the review of specific projects to follow for consistency with policies, guidelines, and best management practices that would be contained in the Final HIREP Wind EIS.

The following are comments and suggestions:

1. The EIS should further document studies and/or provide additional information to demonstrate that all viable energy options for Oahu have been exhausted and that the proposed program is the most feasible course of action.
2. The EIS should specifically address the social costs and benefits of the proposed wind energy program for the island communities of Maui County. The HIREP program is intended to provide up to 400 MW of power for the island of Oahu with the generating facilities located in Maui County. How would residents of Maui, Molokai and/or Lanai benefit? And who bears the costs if these projects fail?

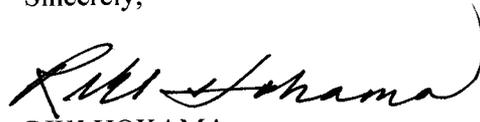
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3. The EIS should address the impact of the proposed action on “rural lifestyle”, specifically hunting, fishing, hiking, gathering, and recreational pursuits on the project islands. For example, the area proposed for a wind farm on Lanai is a hunting area that residents have had access to for many decades. The development of a wind farm in the area could result in restricted access, due to safety, maintenance and security requirements. On Lanai, hunting and fishing is a way of life for many residents and a way to put food on the table and share with friends and family. Lanai is also a venue for off-island hunters who lend support to our local businesses.

4. The impact on commercial harbors should be specifically addressed in the EIS, including but not limited to Kaunapali Harbor on Lanai. The section, “Overview of Land-Based Wind Energy Infrastructure”, in the EIS Preparation Notice states, in relevant part, “On the project islands of Maui County, most of the local harbors are small and not designed for large-scale construction traffic. As a result, the harbors are currently restricted to receiving limited loads and may not be used for turbine component off-loading or servicing of larger construction vessels. Improvements to the facilities would be required to implement construction of a commercial-scale wind energy project. Facility improvements would be required for improved access, receiving and distributing large-scale construction materials and equipment, and berthing and servicing of construction vessels.” (page 2-4) (Emphasis added)

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the scoping of the subject EIS for the Hawaii Interisland Renewable Energy Program. If you have any questions, please contact me at (808) 270-7768 or my Executive Assistant, John Min, at (808) 270-8071.

Sincerely,


RIKI HOKAMA
Council Member

GRH:jem

cc: Danny Mateo, Council Chair