



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Testimony of
SCOTT J. GLENN, Chief Energy Officer

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

SUPPORT
SCR 242 / SR 133

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS' DIVISION OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY, TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A HAWAII LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO ASSIST LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH PAYING FOR THEIR HOME ENERGY.

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SCR 242 / SR 133, requesting the Public Utilities Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Division of Consumer Advocacy, to convene a working group to create a Hawai'i Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (Hawai'i LIHEAP) to assist low-income households with paying for their home energy.

Energy affordability is an important objective of the activities of HSEO, ranging from reducing energy bills through energy efficiency,¹ to transforming Hawai'i's energy system to be less dependent on the unpredictable and often high costs of electricity generation from petroleum fuel, to providing individuals and organizations with information on financial assistance in the energy area.²

HSEO is also intentionally including an equity viewpoint in its office, structure, planning, programming and projects. To this end, HSEO and Hawai'i Energy partnered

¹ Hawai'i State Energy Office, "Achieving Energy Efficiency," <http://energy.hawaii.gov/energy-efficiency>

² Hawai'i State Energy Office, "Energy Financial Assistance," <http://energy.hawaii.gov/financial-resources>

with other state and county agencies, including representatives of the PUC, to establish the Energy Equity Hui, which “prioritizes ensuring clean energy solutions are provided to those who need it most...[and] assuring affordability of electricity costs.”³

This is also the second year that three full-time AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) service members are contributing to HSEO's efforts to make clean energy and clean transportation more accessible and affordable for all Hawai'i residents. The VISTAs, part of the Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA-AmeriCorps cohort coordinated by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, were selected for their ability and commitment to help strengthen HSEO's capacity to serve vulnerable and under-represented communities.

The points made in SCR 242 / SR 133 regarding the importance of energy affordability, especially at this time of rising electricity and fuel prices, illustrate both the importance and the urgency of the situation.

HSEO recommends including, either formally or informally, the Department of Human Services,⁴ which operates the federal LIHEAP program in Hawai'i, and the Department of Labor's Office of Community Services,⁵ which operates the federally-funded Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). This would facilitate understanding of terms, definitions, approach, requirements, and limitations of Federal energy programs (both LIHEAP and WAP) serving low-income populations in Hawai'i, and the gap that the State-level effort would be designed to fill.

HSEO defers to the appropriate agencies for the implementation and fiscal impacts of this measure and looks forward to working together to accomplish the objectives of SCR 242 / SR 133.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

³ https://hawaiienergy.com/images/about/information-and-reports/annual-reports/ProgramYear2020_AnnualReport.pdf#page=10

⁴ <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/liheap/>

⁵ <https://labor.hawaii.gov/ocs/service-programs-index/weatherization-assistance-program/>