



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Testimony of
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before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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1:30 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

**SUPPORT
SB 2056, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS.**

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SB 2056, SD1, HD1, which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and Land Use Commission to conduct a study of the suitability of soil classification systems for the regulation of agricultural lands, requires a report to the Legislature, and appropriates funds.

HSEO agrees the land study bureau (LSB) system may no longer be appropriate to guide Hawai'i's food, agricultural, and energy goals. Further, the bill references the U.S. Department of Agriculture's national soil classification system as an example of other methods that can be used to classify agricultural soils more appropriately.

Current state law (sections 205-2 and 205-4.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes) directs the permissibility of solar energy projects on Agricultural land based on the land's LSB rating. However, in some cases the practical use of the lands for agriculture, or co-location of crops or livestock with solar energy projects, is greater or less than indicated by the soils alone. For example, although the soils in one area may have a productivity rating that is higher than another area the availability or lack of irrigation water may

encourage or constrain the actual productivities of the various sites. The degree to which these factors are captured (or not) in the current system deserves review.

Therefore, HSEO believes that a study of the suitability of soil classification systems for the regulation of agricultural lands would contribute to a better understanding of Hawai'i's agricultural lands, systems, potential, and needs.

HSEO defers to the appropriate agency for administration and fiscal matters.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.