



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Testimony of
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before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Thursday, April 14, 2022
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

**SUPPORT
SCR 48, SD1
REQUESTING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, IN CONSULTATION WITH
THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY, TO CONSIDER EFFORTS TO
MITIGATE HIGH ENERGY BURDENS FOR LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME
CUSTOMERS AND INVESTIGATE HOW TO INTEGRATE CONSIDERATIONS OF
ENERGY EQUITY AND JUSTICE ACROSS ITS WORK.**

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SCR 48, SD1, which requests the Public Utilities Commission, in consultation with the Division of Consumer Advocacy, to investigate how to consider efforts to mitigate high energy burdens for low- and moderate- income customers and investigate how to integrate energy equity and environmental justice across its work.

Hawai'i has one of the lowest homeownership rates in the country. Hawai'i has the highest average housing costs in the nation and the highest electricity rates in the nation. HSEO is intentionally including an equity viewpoint in its office, structure, planning, programming and projects. As HSEO works to more equitably advance Hawai'i's clean energy and climate goals, a successful path to a clean-energy and carbon-free economy requires green economic development innovation that creates living-wage jobs while enhancing environmental and social justice. To this end, HSEO and Hawai'i Energy partnered with other state and county agencies, including

representatives of the PUC, to establish the Energy Equity Hui focused on creating energy equity and justice programming outcomes.

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.

SCR48 is also consistent with federal energy policies. In January, 2022 the United States Department of Energy (USDOE)¹ announced:

...This year, the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity established an Office of Energy Justice Policy and Analysis, which focuses on creating a policy framework to permanently reduce energy burden and increase access to low-cost clean energy capital in disadvantaged households.

...At DOE, we define **energy justice** as “the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those disproportionately harmed by the energy system” (Initiative for Energy Justice, 2019).

HSEO defers to the appropriate agency for the implementation and fiscal impacts of this measure and looks forward to working with it, and others, in accomplishing the objectives of SCR 48.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ United States Department of Energy, Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, January 3, 2022. <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/articles/how-energy-justice-presidential-initiatives-and-executive-orders-shape-equity>