



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

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9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Videoconference

In SUPPORT of
HCR 17 / HR 20

REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO ENGAGE THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT PRESENCE WITHIN THE STATE OF HAWAII.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HCR 17 / HR 20, which requests HSEO to engage the United States Department of Energy (USDOE) to establish a permanent presence within the State of Hawai'i.

The USDOE has been a critical partner to the State of Hawai'i in achieving its clean energy goals and economic transformation. As noted in HCR 17 / HR 20, the Legislature designated HSEO as the lead agency for the Hawai'i Clean Energy Initiative, a partnership between the USDOE and State of Hawai'i. In 196-72(d)(4), HRS, the Legislature further tasked the Chief Energy Officer to "Coordinate the State's energy programs with those of the federal government, other territory and state governments, the political subdivisions of the State, departments of the State, and governments of nations with interest in common energy resources."

Since the re-establishment of HSEO as an independent attached agency to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), HSEO has pursued its statutory responsibilities to increase public support of and confidence in

Hawai'i's renewable energy transition and US leadership on renewable energy and climate change mitigation.

A permanent USDOE presence in Hawai'i that is designed to support HSEO and HSEO's mission could accelerate the leadership and transformation of Hawai'i toward a resilient, clean energy economy. In addition to the policy leadership cited in HCR 17 / HR 20, Hawai'i is leading in innovative project development and execution and our unique geography and discrete energy systems serve as models for testing and demonstrating effective policies and technologies. Hawai'i has pioneered grassroots community-led renewable energy transition energy planning and technical assistance. Many of these place-based and locally managed initiatives have received support from the USDOE through its various programs and national labs. A permanent presence in Hawai'i to support state institutions and policies would deepen and further integrate these collaborations.

Concurrent with the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 Initiative, HSEO works to more equitably advance Hawai'i's clean energy and climate goals. We understand that 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 has established a Wayfinder community engagement program and helped establish the Energy Equity Hui focused on creating energy equity and justice programming outcomes. USDOE's participation in this network would help bolster collaboration across sectors and create opportunities to share information directly to and from the USDOE.

Hawai'i has recently hosted several USDOE representatives including Deputy Secretary of Energy David Turk, Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity and Secretarial Advisor on Equity Shalanda Baker, Director of the Office of State and Community Energy Programs Dr. Henry McKoy, and State and Community Energy Programs Project Officer Monica Andrews. In their respective visits, these USDOE leaders came to better understand Hawaii and had the opportunity to meaningfully

connect with our communities, HSEO leadership and staff, and Energy Equity Hui members to discuss Hawai'i's energy equity priorities and see firsthand the need for support to pursue an equitable clean energy transition. A permanent USDOE presence would allow for these interactions to occur more frequently and organically to strengthen collaboration and access for all Hawai'i residents.

Lastly, Hawai'i, as a US State centered in the Pacific, regularly engages in international diplomatic relations. Hawai'i's clean energy leadership has resulted in partnerships directly with countries and islands across the Pacific. The Biden-Harris Administration has identified clean energy and climate technology, investment, and policymaking as critical tools for the Indo-Pacific National Security Strategy. As Hawai'i is also the home to the Department of Defense's presence in the Indo-Pacific region, having a permanent USDOE presence in Hawai'i would enhance not only Hawai'i's engagement and support for the Biden-Harris Administration's objectives, but collaboration between the USDOD and USDOE on national security.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.