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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
AND
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Thursday, February 1, 2024
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In Support of
SB 2539

RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY.

Chairs DeCoite and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SB 2539 that requires government entities in the State that issue building permits to implement SolarAPP+ or a functionally equivalent online automated permitting platform by 1/1/2025. The measure also requires government entities in the State that issue building permits in areas served by an investor-owned electric utility to adopt a self-certification process for solar distributed energy resource systems that are not SolarAPP+ compatible.

HSEO notes that SolarAPP+ has several appealing features, including its development by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, nation-wide availability, significant improvements in capabilities since just last year, and partnerships with standards bodies, code councils, and at least one nationally recognized testing laboratory. But, HSEO appreciates the flexibility provided in the measure of the option to use a functionally equivalent online permitting platform.

HSEO recognizes that individual permitting agencies are taking steps to improve the permitting for solar photovoltaic and battery installations, and it appears that the SolarAPP+ requirement is compatible with those efforts.

HSEO looks forward to working with the authorities having jurisdiction on this section of the bill, which is consistent with existing statutory responsibilities of HSEO and of the Chief Energy Officer, including those set forth in Section 196-72 (d):

- (2) Identify, track, and report key performance measures and milestones related to the State's energy and decarbonization goals;
- (3) Provide technical assistance to state and county agencies to assess and implement projects and programs related to energy conservation and efficiency, renewable energy ... and related measures;

And also

- (15) Facilitate the efficient, expedited permitting of energy efficiency, renewable energy, clean transportation, and energy resiliency projects.

Regarding the self-certification section of the bill, HSEO notes the efficiency of the concept and looks forward to supporting the authorities having jurisdiction as they “establish a self-certification process” (page 4, lines 13-14) to allow residential and commercial on-site solar distributed energy resource systems to **begin** construction, with the understanding (based on discussions on a similar bill introduced last year) that final compliance review and approval will take place at the time of final inspection by the authority having jurisdiction (i.e. permitting agency).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.