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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Friday, March 14, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In SUPPORT of
HB 316, HD1

RELATING TO THE GREEN JOBS YOUTH CORPS.

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 316, HD1, which makes appropriations to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program. This program is a valuable state investment in training and employing young professionals in Hawai'i's job market in a manner that strengthens the bond between state government and the public.

The Green Jobs Youth Corps funded the first two years of HSEO's Clean Energy Wayfinders Program operated in partnership with the Kupu 'Āina Corps since February 2022. The Wayfinders Program is a collaboration of the Green Jobs Youth Corps Program and HSEO and involves place-training and deployment of Wayfinders Program participants under HSEO's direction on five islands – Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island. The substantive deliverables of Wayfinder Program participants are the provision of actionable, relevant information and support to local residences, businesses, schools, and community organizations on community resilience and independence, funding opportunities, energy savings, energy generation alternatives, and transportation options. The Wayfinders Program participants also support

community-led planning initiatives that form the foundation of Hawai'i's energy transition and education of Hawai'i's future leaders through work with Hawai'i's K-12 schools.

HSEO considers the Wayfinder Program participants as an important human resource providing a consistent physical statewide presence that supports state agencies in building community dialogue and understanding of the diverse, complex energy ecosystem.

If state funds are not available, the third year of the Wayfinders program would be at risk, since HSEO's option to instead use federal funds cannot be relied upon due to Trump Administration executive orders that broadly prohibit federal grant support of community engagement initiatives such as the Green Jobs Youth Corps program provides.

Such a prohibition is confounding given the productivity and effectiveness of the Clean Energy Wayfinders Program. For the third year of the program ending September 2024, HSEO's Clean Energy Wayfinder team engaged more than 2,447 community members and business operators in 80 events; i.e., community workshops, K-12 school presentations, and farmers markets. The Wayfinder participants also recruited 16 small businesses and restaurants through the Hawai'i Green Business Program which recognizes and awards Hawai'i small and large businesses for their conservation and sustainable business practices.

As a youth professional development program, the Clean Energy Wayfinders Program is producing a new generation of clean energy and conservation leaders in Hawai'i and beyond. The Wayfinders who have completed their terms are now employed in positions spanning the fields of education, renewable energy, environmental consulting, state lawmaking, and sustainable agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.