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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

In Support of
HB 316

RELATING TO THE GREEN JOBS YOUTH CORPS.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 316, which makes appropriations to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program.

The Green Jobs Youth Corps program funded the first two years of HSEO's Clean Energy Wayfinders program operated in partnership with the Kupu 'Āina Corps since February 2022. Now entering its third year, the Wayfinders expand HSEO's statewide capacity for building and maintaining robust community relationships with physical presence on five islands: Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island. The Wayfinders provide actionable information and support to Hawai'i residences, businesses, schools, and community organizations by supporting community-led renewable energy planning initiatives and sharing information about accessible energy programs and resources including funding opportunities (e.g., grants), energy efficiency incentives and rebates, and renewable energy programs (e.g., rooftop solar).

In Year 2 from September 2023 to September 2024 the Clean Energy Wayfinders: led or participated in over 80 events including community workshops, K-12 school presentations, and farmers markets; engaged over 2,447 community members

and business operators; and, 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.

At its core a professional development program for participants, the Wayfinders expand the green workforce by launching a new generation of clean energy and conservation leaders in Hawai'i and beyond. The eight Wayfinders who have completed their terms are now employed in positions spanning the fields of education, renewable energy, environmental consulting, and sustainable agriculture, speaking to the efficacy of the program's workforce development goals.

The Wayfinders program has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy as a community engagement approach that can help ensure benefits from funding opportunities flow to underserved, overburdened, and frontline communities.

As this is a conservation issue, we defer to the appropriate agency for comment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.