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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
AND
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Thursday, January 30, 2025
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

In Support of
SB 588

RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY.

Chairs Wakai and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Chang and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports the further development of SB 588, specifically those sections that require County permitting agencies (1) to allow self-certification by licensed professionals in order to obtain permits to begin construction on customer-sited solar distributed energy systems and (2) to allow the value of those systems to be omitted from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone valuation calculations.

The bill provides an opportunity to address two issues commonly cited in delays to installation of customer-sited solar systems. Improvements in these areas are urgent, as time is of the essence due to potential reductions of federal tax credits; future cost increases due to tariffs; critical installation to provide backup power for public safety power shutoffs; as well as ongoing concerns over energy security and greenhouse gas emissions.

HSEO recognizes that individual permitting agencies are taking steps to improve the permitting for solar photovoltaic and battery installations.

HSEO looks forward to working with interested parties on this 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 evaluate allowing 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).

This is consistent with Executive Order No.. 25-01 (Accelerating Hawai'i's Transition Toward 100 Percent Renewable Energy) issued by Governor Green on January 27, 2025 that among other things calls for establishing programs for same-day online permit issuance of all single-family residential homes, self-certification permitting for all townhome projects twenty kilowatts and under, and professional self-certification for permitting behind-the-meter customer-sited solar, energy storage, and energy efficiency measures for commercial and multifamily and condominium projects

Regarding the FEMA portion of the bill, HSEO has heard of this approach in other jurisdictions, ¹ so believes the concept has merit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Personal communication, [SolSmart](#), 2024.