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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Thursday, April 10, 2025
9:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Videoconference

In Support of
SCR 136, SD1

REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO CONVENE A GEOTHERMAL ENERGY WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE REGULATORY AND POLICY LANDSCAPE SURROUNDING GEOTHERMAL ENERGY IN HAWAII.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SCR 136, SD1, which requests HSEO to convene a geothermal energy working group to evaluate the regulatory and policy landscape surrounding geothermal energy in Hawai'i.

The state's energy transition to 100% RPS by 2045 will require the full diversity of available renewable resource options, despite much of the focus being on affordable and abundant intermittent solar and wind resources. Geothermal is a firm and dispatchable renewable energy resource that has enormous potential as an affordable means of energy security and reliability, and has the potential to have a transformative effect on Hawai'i's energy ecosystem.

However, potential roadblocks to advancing geothermal energy development require intergovernmental collaboration to overcome. These challenges include a lack of data on the geothermal and groundwater resources (resource potential), as well as uncertainty regarding the regulatory conditions for the permitting and construction of a new geothermal energy production plant. Relating to the understanding of resource potential, in 2024, Governor Josh Green, M.D., allocated \$5 million from the

Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund for slim-hole geothermal resource characterization to identify possible locations for viable geothermal energy deployment. HSEO is working with the University of Hawai'i's Groundwater and Geothermal Resource Center (HGGRC) to conduct this resource assessment, building on their research and the existing body of knowledge. However, more funding is needed to determine the resource potential statewide. Given the uncertain regulatory conditions, a review of policy and regulations leading to actionable recommendations could help lower the barriers to geothermal energy production.

HSEO recognizes that, as stated in the resolution, "a coordinated, transparent, and community-inclusive process is essential to evaluating the role of geothermal energy in Hawai'i". HSEO emphasizes that a key priority of the State, and a foundation of the working group, should be guided by the understanding of the underlying geothermal resource potential. Establishing this working group provides an important opportunity to collaboratively evaluate pathways for responsibly deploying geothermal energy in Hawai'i, address regulatory and community considerations, and inform the State's broader energy goals.

This working group could allow HSEO and other stakeholders the ability to find viable solutions for allowing the potential of geothermal energy production to become a larger reality as we move towards our clean energy goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.