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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Tuesday, March 25, 2025
3:01 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 and Videoconference

Providing Comments on
SR 115

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 Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) respectfully provides comments on SR 115 that requests HSEO to convene a geothermal energy working group to evaluate regulatory and policy landscape surrounding geothermal energy in Hawai'i.

The state's energy transition to 100% RPS by 2045 will require more than the intermittent sources of energy that solar and wind provide. Firm and dispatchable resources, such as geothermal, are paramount to our energy reliability and grid stability. Geothermal energy has the potential to have a transformative effect on Hawai'i's energy ecosystem.

Potential roadblocks to advancing geothermal energy development include 1) a lack of data on the geothermal and groundwater resources (resource potential) that exist, 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. Relating to the uncertain regulatory conditions, a review of policy and regulations leading to actionable recommendations could make the barrier to geothermal energy production more attainable.

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". Accordingly, HSEO notes that the members listed in the current working group may not adequately represent the Native Hawaiian community. However, HSEO is committed to ensuring that appropriate community organizations are invited to join the working group, as permitted by this resolution.

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. Given the ongoing resource assessment and its associated timeline, HSEO recommends that this working group be convened over two years instead of one.

Accordingly, HSEO respectfully requests one amendment to the bill on Page 4, line 17, to extend the due date of the report of findings, allowing the work to align more closely with the ongoing resource exploration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii State Energy Office is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of ~~2026~~2027;

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.