



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Submitted to the
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Tourism and Technology
March 15, 2017 at 1:15 p.m.

by
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HB 1041 – RELATING TO REPORTING BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Taniguchi, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i is in support of HB 1041.

Hawai'i Revised Statutes Section 304A-1893.1, requires an evaluation of the projects and activities funded by the Energy Systems Development Special Fund every three years. The fund, maintained through an allocation of the State's barrel tax, is administered by the Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute (HNEI).

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the degree to which the projects and activities comport with and achieve the stated objectives of the Energy Systems Development Special Fund, which include: obtaining matching funds for research, development, and demonstration of renewable energy sources, awarding contracts or grants to develop technologies to reduce the state's dependence on imported energy resources, and to manage the projects supported by the fund.

HB 1041 would change the appointment of the two-person panel that conducts the evaluation from the Director of the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) to the University of Hawai'i Vice President for Research and Innovation.

As HNEI is also directed by statute to coordinate its efforts with DBEDT, with the intent of promoting effective prioritization and focusing of efforts consistent with the State's energy programs, it is appropriate that DBEDT not appoint the panel evaluating these efforts. The UH Vice President for Research and Innovation is a qualified and suitable alternative.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.