Good afternoon Chair Sullivan and members of the Committee:

My name is Joe Mobley, I’m a professor in the School of Nursing and one of the co-leaders of the DivestUH movement. I’m also a member of the BOR Task Group on Divestment and Sustainability, and I’m testifying today in support of the recommendations of that group.

When we started this process back in the Fall, it was our hope then that we would enter into this effort collaboratively, but the result surpassed our expectations. Though when we met with several of you in the beginning we were far apart on the merits of fossil fuel divestment as a means of coping with global warming, it became clear over the months that that distance had narrowed. In fact, after working with you on the task group, it became clear to me that at least several of you had come to embrace this issue as common cause. So I wanted to express my sincere thanks and Aloha to you for listening to our arguments and for making this process a path of learning and mutual respect.

As I’ve expressed several times during our deliberations as a group, passing this divestment resolution would make us the 26th higher education institution to divest, and the first major research university in the U.S. to do so (Stanford was coal only). It would literally put the University of Hawaii on the fossil-free map.

Also, if the full Board approves this resolution, it will send a clear message throughout the State that divesting from fossil fuels makes sense. Along these lines I wanted to share a text I received from Representative Chris Lee yesterday stating that “HCR222 just passed the House floor establishing a Divestment task force for all public investments.” This is the first step to potentially divesting the entire $13.5B of the State’s ERS funds from fossil fuels, truly an exciting development.

So from all of us in the DivestUH movement, thank you for all that you’ve done.

Aloha,

--Joe