



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Submitted to the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, February 27, 2015, 1:00 pm

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

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SB 359 – RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE, ENERGY, AND FOOD SECURITY TAX

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kouchi, and members of the committee:

My name is Richard Rocheleau, Director of the Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute (HNEI) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. HNEI supports using the entire barrel tax for the purposes for which it was enacted - namely to "build the capacity we need to become self-sufficient in our energy and food needs and to protect the health and function of our environment."

The Barrel Tax was intended to support critical investments in clean energy, local agricultural production, and environmental response to reduce the State's dependence on imported fossil fuels and food products. In enacting the barrel tax legislation, the legislature found that: "undertaking the important task of energy and food security requires a long-term commitment and the investment of substantial financial resources." Although we are not asking for, nor would this bill provide HNEI, any additional barrel tax funding, we strongly believe that a sustained commitment is necessary to achieve the State's goals with regard to food, energy, and the environment.

HNEI knows first-hand that the efforts needed to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels are complex. Capital investments today will dictate the shape of our energy system for decades to come.

Passage of this bill, by increasing the barrel tax funding to DBEDT, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Health will affirm the State's long term commitment necessary to help Hawai'i attain food and energy security and sustainability.