



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Energy and Environment
and Agriculture

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By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Richard Rochelleau, Director

Hawaii Natural Energy Institute

School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 358 – RELATING TO ENERGY

Chairs Gabbard and Ruderman, Vice Chairs Green and Riviere, and members of the committees:

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." HNEI also supports levying the barrel tax on all imported fossil fuels.

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 with 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 Hawaii attain food and energy security and sustainability.

HNEI also supports amending the law to levy the barrel tax on all fossil fuels to ensure the intent of the law is not averted and the revenue stream it provides will not be diminished should liquefied natural gas or other fossil fuel products not covered by the current law be imported to the state and displace a portion of our use of petroleum products.