



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism,
and
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Monday, February 10, 2020 at 2:45 p.m.

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SB 2818 – RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

Chairs Wakai and Baker, Vice Chairs Taniguchi and Chang, and members of the committees:

The Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute (HNEI) supports the intent of this bill and provides the following comments.

SB 2818 would require the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to contract with HNEI to conduct a study to determine the economic and technical feasibility of the use of renewable gas by gas utilities, and would appropriate funds for the study.

HNEI is currently conducting preliminary assessments of the potential for producing renewable natural gas (RNG) in the state. These assessments will include an inventory of existing and potential feedstocks, conversion technologies, a review of incentives in other locations, and greenhouse gas emissions impacts of RNG production.

The study contemplated by the bill is both broader than HNEI's current assessments and includes more specific factors to be assessed, which may be appropriate before requiring gas utilities to meet specific renewable targets. However, HNEI believes that some of the listed factors such as those listed in section 3(a)(10)(F) effects on the economy, (G) balance of trade, culture, community, environment, land, and water, and (I) demographics, are unclear or overly broad. HNEI requests that these factors be clarified or left for the PUC to determine their practicality and relevance to the study.

Funding for the study could be accommodated through HNEI's barrel tax allocation, and should not require an additional appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 2818.