



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SB 1269
RELATING TO GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES.

Aloha Chair Decoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for SB1269, which advances geothermal energy development in Hawaii as a critical component of our state's renewable energy portfolio. Geothermal energy is not only a key solution to achieving Hawaii's 100% Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) mandate by 2045 but also an essential resource for stabilizing energy costs, particularly for our manufacturing and data center industries.

Hawaii's heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels has historically resulted in some of the highest electricity costs in the nation. As outlined in the geothermal roadmap of DBEDT's Hawaii Economic Landscape, increasing our geothermal capacity presents a strategic opportunity to enhance grid reliability, reduce dependency on volatile global oil markets, and provide cost-effective energy solutions that benefit both businesses and consumers.

Furthermore, the advancement of geothermal energy development is critical to enabling Hawaii's future economic growth, particularly in sectors such as advanced manufacturing and data centers. These industries depend on reliable and affordable electricity to remain competitive. Without a stable energy supply, Hawaii risks losing out on investment opportunities that could otherwise diversify our economy, create high-paying jobs, and foster technological innovation.

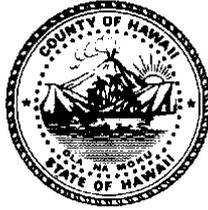
A key initiative supporting this effort is the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) and the University of Hawaii (UH). This partnership is actively working towards the development of a commercial geothermal project, leveraging UH's expertise in geological research and HTDC's role in fostering innovation and economic diversification. The MOA outlines a structured framework, including key deliverables such as program and project management, community engagement and outreach, long-term development planning, strategic advisory efforts, and the documentation of key development assets. These deliverables align directly with the objectives of SB1269 and provide a concrete pathway to accelerating geothermal exploration and commercialization.

To achieve this, SB1269 provides a necessary framework to support and expand these ongoing efforts by facilitating geothermal exploration, streamlining permitting processes, and promoting research and development initiatives. By leveraging our natural resources and existing institutional partnerships, we can make a meaningful impact on our state's energy independence and economic resilience.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass SB1269 to secure Hawaii's clean energy future while ensuring long-term energy affordability for businesses and residents alike.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brillhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

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January 31, 2025

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:
Tuesday Feb 4, 2025, 1pm
Room 229

SB1269

Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on
Economic Development and Tourism:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Committee,

My name is Kimo Alameda, Mayor of Hawai'i County and I am writing to express my strong support for the measure to allocate funds to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) for the continued exploration and identification of geothermal resources, particularly in counties with populations of less than 300,000. As an official of Hawai'i County, I can confidently speak to the importance of this initiative not only for the future of our local economy but for the broader energy future of our state.

The measure before you is a critical step forward in the pursuit of commercial geothermal power generation. It is important to note that DBEDT's intent under this legislative ask is to explore the commercial viability of geothermal. This is precisely what DBEDT is mandated to do – drive economic development. As we all know, energy is the backbone of any economy. Without secure, affordable, and sustainable energy sources, our economic growth is limited. To date, most public funds have been directed toward geoscientific exploration, which, while important for understanding our resources, has not yet translated into tangible economic outcomes. Now is the time to take the next step, to see if these resources can be developed to power our economy and benefit our communities.

DBEDT is pursuing a strategic, phased approach to geothermal development, culminating in the construction of a geothermal power plant. This roadmap is designed with clear, measurable benchmarks so that legislators can easily assess whether or not the project is on track. If the benchmarks are met, it will demonstrate that this is a wise investment for the state, with the potential for significant returns in the form of reliable, renewable energy. If the benchmarks are not met, the legislature will have the clarity to redirect funds and efforts elsewhere. This approach ensures that we only continue to invest in geothermal if it proves to be a commercially viable and sustainable solution for Hawaii's energy future.

An important distinction is that DBEDT's geothermal roadmap isn't focused on just one location, but rather it explores multiple sites across the islands. This expanded footprint increases our chances of success by providing more opportunities to identify the most suitable and productive locations for geothermal power generation and energy delivery. The Big Island, in particular, is a prime focus due to its proven geothermal resources. The extensive exploration already conducted here has shown that we have the most abundant geothermal supply in the state, and it makes sense to build on that data rather than starting from scratch in less explored areas.

The state's energy future depends on smart investments, and rather than chasing after speculative sources, we should prioritize the areas where we already know there is significant geothermal potential. Hawai'i Island has been the focus of geothermal exploration for decades, and the data we have provides a solid foundation for moving forward.

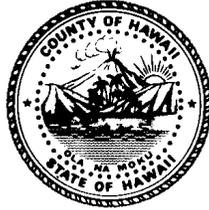
With Governor Green's mandate to meet a renewable energy goal of 2045, it's imperative that we act decisively. Geothermal, as a proven renewable resource, plays a vital role in this strategy. For the state to meet its energy goals, we must develop all available resources, and geothermal on the Big Island is one of the most promising and cost-effective ways to meet those objectives. Inaction or delay could hinder our progress, especially given the urgency of meeting the 2035 and 2045 renewable energy targets.

This funding will not only enable us to move forward with the necessary exploration and assessment of geothermal power generation but will also allow us to take a critical step toward the creation of a sustainable, local energy solution that will serve the Big Island and the entire state for generations to come. I urge you to support this measure and help bring the full potential of Hawaii's geothermal resources into our state's energy future.

I support SB 1269 and hope that the committee will as well.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

James E. Hustace
Council Member
District 9
North & South Kohala



(808) 961-8564
james.hustace@hawaiiicounty.gov



HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL
25 Aupuni Street | Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 3, 2025

Testimony of James E. Hustace
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

Before the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

On
SB 1269, Relating to Geothermal Resources

Tuesday February 4, 2025, 1pm
Room 229

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong SUPPORT of SB 1269. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as Council Member of the Hawai'i County Council.

I am writing to express my strong support for the measure to allocate funding to the Department of Business, Economic Development, & Tourism (DBEDT) for continued exploration and identification of geothermal resources in counties with populations of less than 300,000. Geothermal energy has immense potential to provide us with clean, renewable power, and we must invest in its development to create a more sustainable future for our state.

DBEDT is the ideal agency to lead this effort. Through its work with the Hawai'i Technology Development Authority (HTDC), DBEDT has already shown a clear commitment to geothermal exploration and has laid the groundwork for building a viable, commercially sustainable geothermal industry here in Hawai'i. By continuing to fund DBEDT's efforts, we ensure that progress can continue and that we can move from research to actual, practical energy solutions.

Hawai'i has already spent significant time and resources researching geothermal, but without a clear path to development, these efforts will not lead to the tangible benefits we need. This measure will help us move beyond studies and into actual geothermal production, allowing us to harness a critical local resource that can reduce our dependence on imported fuels and bring jobs and energy security to our communities.

Geothermal energy, however, is a sensitive issue for many Native Hawaiians who hold Pele, the goddess of fire and volcanoes, in deep reverence. The land and the resources beneath it are sacred, and we must

approach geothermal development with the utmost cultural sensitivity and respect for the traditions and beliefs of our people. It is essential that we ensure any geothermal projects are done in a way that honors the land, respects Hawaiian culture, and prioritizes the involvement of Native Hawaiian communities at every step of the process.

A key partner in this effort is Waikā Consulting LLC, a Native Hawaiian-owned business that has been instrumental in engaging with local communities and ensuring that geothermal development respects cultural values. Waikā's experience in developing Native-to-Native models for energy development in New Zealand offers a valuable framework that can be adapted to Hawai'i. By leading with Native Hawaiian knowledge and values, we can ensure that any geothermal development benefits the community and our future generations, while being done responsibly and sustainably.

This measure is an important step in moving Hawai'i toward a clean, sustainable energy future. I urge you to support this funding, as it will help us unlock the full potential of our geothermal resources and create long-lasting, positive impacts for our people and our environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo nui,

James E. Hustace
Hawai'i County Council Member
District 9 (North & South Kohala)

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:50:15 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roberta Cabral	Testifying for Innovations Development Group (IDG)	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony of Roberta Cabral, Founder, Innovations Development Group (IDG) before the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday Feb 4, 2025 Room 229

SB1266: Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism,

Today’s hearing is a big leap forward towards realizing our ambition for Hawaii to be on 100% renewable energy by 2045. For the Neighbor Islands, the Governor has just made that goal even more urgent, moving the target date to 2035.

I am here to urge you to pass SB1269 because what this bill says is that we are finally taking serious action to get off our terrible, costly addiction to fossil fuels.

That addiction has made life intolerably expensive for the people of Hawaii and especially the people of Hawaii island. They should not be paying the highest costs for electricity in the nation. It’s tragic, because Hawaii island has the resources to get off fossil fuels-- if we have the will to do so.

It appears we now have the will to move away from fossil fuels.

I am here as the founder of Innovations Development Group or IDG. In 2010 we began the effort to assess whether we indeed had the resources to replace fossil fuels. And the answer is YES, WE DO.

We are all familiar with the power of Tutu Pele. She is so central to Hawaiian tradition and cultural practice. We needed to get community understanding that we were acting respectfully in trying to draw out the gifts of Tutu Pele. Our outreach efforts raised public awareness and understanding. I believe that we now have a community that understands the appropriateness of respectfully tapping Tutu Pele’s gifts to her people.

The public wants and needs what geothermal can give them. With the help of geothermal energy as the firm power baseload, the people of Hawaii island can look forward to lower prices for electricity. Homes, schools, community centers, businesses all need energy to run and thrive. That energy must be affordable. We clearly have market demand. We clearly have need. People would not be fleeing our island homes if they could afford to live here.

IDG saw that market demand and need. We responded to HECO's RFI in 2011 and its RFP in 2013. We provided a roadmap for the development of a power plant. We were shortlisted! But no award was made. That's why this bill more than 10 years later is so welcome.

The need has only become more urgent. That's why IDG formed Waika Consulting. We want to deliver power FOR the people. SB1269 will help us do that. We were selected to advise DBEDT on geothermal development because we have a proven track record. We have done in New Zealand what this bill will make possible here in Hawaii.

This bill does not just point to exploration for geothermal resources. We already know that geothermal resources exist in abundance on Hawaii island. This bill allows us to refine the exploratory work done so far and move in phases to the building of a 50-100MW power plant. We have developed a roadmap that shows what will happen in each phase. You, as policy-makers will have transparency and measurable outcomes.

We can do this because we have already done it elsewhere. We can do this because our team has access to the best in the business. We already have relationships with top tier experts at the globally recognized University of Auckland Geosciences Department.

As you know from the testimony of others, we went to Aotearoa at the invitation of the Maori Queen to develop the geothermal resources of the Maori Trusts. The model we developed with the guidance of Mililani Trask, who co-authored the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), was one that respects Maori culture and ensures that they benefit long term from the prosperity that their geothermal resources create. Our native-to-native model put indigenous people at the table, making decisions about the resource that they own in Aotearoa. We will adapt and replicate that model here. We have seen it work. Geothermal energy is already feeding New Zealand's grid. It can do the same here.

And that will dramatically change everything.

As Native Hawaiians we are deeply committed to ensuring that the community which has been hurting for too long, sees their lives and livelihoods improve, thanks to the goodness of Tūtu Pele's gift.

We truly believe we are unique in what we can offer the state. No other entity has the depth of geothermal expertise that our group has in educating the community. We want to put that experience and expertise to work for Hawaii. We can make a really big contribution to transforming our energy landscape and moving us closer to energy independence. And that is what DBEDT needs to help spur economic development.

Waika's goal is to deliver power FOR the people. Please move this bill forward. Mahalo nui.



Testimony of Ryan Matsumoto on behalf of Waika Consulting
Before the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Tuesday Feb 4, 2025 Room 229

SB 1269: Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism,

Waikā Consulting, LLC submits this testimony in strong support of SB1269, a vital measure to advance Hawai'i's energy independence through responsible and equitable geothermal energy development. As a Native Hawaiian-owned company, Waikā has advocated for a Native-to-Native model for over two decades, ensuring Indigenous leadership in resource management. Our commitment is to ensure geothermal energy benefits Native Hawaiians, uplifts local communities, and contributes to a sustainable, self-reliant future for Hawai'i.

Despite geothermal being a major renewable resource in Hawai'i, its development has historically excluded Native Hawaiians from leadership roles and economic benefits. Waikā advocates for a future where Native Hawaiians are not just stakeholders but decision-makers and beneficiaries in geothermal energy development.

Waikā brings a proven model for responsible geothermal development, grounded in Native leadership:

- **Native-to-Native Partnership Success:** We have partnered with Māori communities in Aotearoa (New Zealand) to successfully develop sustainable energy, creating economic growth and community benefits.
- **Building Capacity in Hawai'i Since 2011:** Waikā has engaged Native Hawaiians to ensure they are at the forefront of industry development.
- **Comprehensive Multi-Site Approach:** Waikā is advancing geothermal development across multiple sites on the Island of Hawai'i, aiming to lower energy costs, provide clean energy at scale, and create economic opportunities.
- **Alignment with State Priorities:** Our vision supports the State of Hawai'i's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), ensuring Indigenous resource management plays a central role in economic resilience.



Waikā has spent over a decade engaging with impacted communities to ensure that Native Hawaiians lead in the responsible development of this sacred resource. Our approach is rooted in cultural integrity, environmental responsibility, and economic equity – ensuring that Hawai'i's energy transition strengthens our resilience, honors our kūpuna, and builds a sustainable future for all.

This measure's impact extends far beyond energy; it touches every aspect of our economy, culture, and self-sufficiency. By supporting SB1269, you are ensuring that Hawai'i's clean energy transition is led by Native Hawaiian agency, not at its expense.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration. We respectfully urge your strong support for this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Matsumoto', is positioned above the printed name.

Ryan Matsumoto
President, Waika Consulting



**Hawaiian
Electric**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**SB 1269
Relating to Geothermal Resources**

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Greg Shimokawa
Director of Renewable Acquisition
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Shimokawa and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in support of SB 1269, which appropriates funds for the exploration and identification of geothermal resources and commercial viability for utility-scale geothermal production.

Hawaiian Electric supports the exploration of geothermal resources as a means to help accelerate the development of renewable energy projects, achieve the State's Renewable Portfolio Standards requirements, reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, help stabilize customers' bills, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Hawaiian Electric supports the intent of identifying and developing the State's geothermal resources and renewable energy potential, but defers to policy makers on the appropriateness of funding allocations stipulated in the bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1269.

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 8:30:23 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Kahawaiolaa	Testifying for Komike O Kupuna Ainahoopulapula	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

of Patrick Kahawaiolaa

Before the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

Tuesday Feb 4, 2025 Room 229 SB1269 Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

My name is Pat Kahawaiolaa, I am a native Hawaiian as defined, pursuant to the HHCA, 1920, as amended July 9, 1921 (42, 42 stat. 108) 67th Congress, the Act that was INCORPORATED as a COMPACT between the United States and the NEW State of Hawaii (PL 86-3, 73 stat. 4) March 18, 1959... I'm also a kupuna who has lived my entire life on Hawaii Island on the ainahoopulapula ma Keaukaha ame Panaewa, except for the 20 years 1963-1883 that I SERVED in the US Navy (1963-1969) and met and married my spouse, of 52 years until her passing in 2019, who was also a native Hawaiian, a Product of the kaiaulu ma Kewalo, Papakōlea...

I have lived in Keaukaha and Now on an agricultural lot in Panaewa since returning to my 'One hānau... We lived for many years, on the lands that are part of our ancestors' legacy here on Hawai'i Island. As a kupuna, I carry the kuleana (responsibility) of caring for our traditions and trying to guide the generations to come. Today, I speak in support of this measure to allocate funding for geothermal development, but with a STRONG reservation to ensure that our Native Hawaiian values, our community, and our SACRED 'āina are at the heart of every decision made.

We have always been deeply Connected to the land, and for me, the 'āina is not just a place to live - it's who we are. It holds our history, our stories, and our identity. The resources beneath the earth, like geothermal energy, are no different. They are a part of our natural world, and how we use them must ., Honor the values and Respect the traditions passed down from our wā kahiko (ancestors)...That is why it is so important that any geothermal development in our islands be guided by the voices of the people. Our native Hawaiian communities MUST be at the table, especially those, who have been the stewards of this land for generations. We cannot allow these decisions to be made by outsiders without consideration of our cultural connection to the land.

Development must come with Consultation, Collaboration, and an Clear understanding that we are protecting what matters most to us. It is crucial that we take a community-centered approach, especially when it comes to something as powerful as geothermal energy. We must make sure that any development is done Responsibly, with Respect for our Customary & Traditional cultural practices and the sanctity of our resources. The land must not be seen as something to exploit, but as something to care for, as we have done for generations....

(He Alii Ka ‘Aina, He Kauwā Ke Kanaka) an olelo noeau by Kupuna Mary Kawena Pukui... “...the Land is Chief, wē are merely its servant...”)(Any decision to move forward with geothermal must be rooted in the understanding that the land itself holds mana and that power must be respected and protected).

I also want to highlight the importance of the involvement of Native Hawaiian-led organizations... They have provided us the way forward with their experience in culturally responsible energy development and their deep understanding of how to balance modern progress with traditional Hawaiian values. It is their leadership, and the leadership of others like them, ...As a Advocate who has continually fought for the rights of our native Hawaiian people for many years, I urge you to make sure that any geothermal development process is one that uplifts our voices and ensures that Our people benefit from the land and its resources. We need to make sure that we are not just developing energy for the masses, but developing a future where our communities are Empowered, where our culture is Respected, and where the ‘āina continues to Thrive for generations to come.

Geothermal energy has the potential to benefit our Hawaii, but we must proceed with great Care & Caution. I ask that you move forward with this funding, HOWEVER... only in a way that respects the voices of our people and our connection to the land. Let us guide this process, together, with Responsibility, Respect, and Aloha for all of our future generations.

I strongly support SB 1269 and ask you to do so as well...I can be reached at (808) 937-8217

Mahalo nui loa.

Pat Kahawaiolaa, Advocate

Komike O Kūpuna ‘Ainahoopulapula (KOKA)



LEPO 'ULA

South Ka'ū Rural Enterprise & Innovation Hive

Z. Ka'apana 'Aki
Chief Hive Strategist
lepoulahawaii@gmail.com

SB1269

RELATING TO GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

February 4, 2025 – 1:00 PM

Aloha e Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Zuri Ka'apana 'Aki, and I am the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Lepo 'Ula South Ka'ū Rural Enterprise & Innovation Hive, a Hawai'i-based and Native Hawaiian-led non-profit organization championing sustainable and responsible rural development to uplift and empower historically underserved and socially disadvantaged communities, while safeguarding and perpetuating Native Hawaiian identity and our inseparable connection to place.

As a resident of Ka'ū with generational roots in this moku (district) reaching deep into time immemorial, I feel compelled to offer this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB1269, which would further the work of the State Department of Business, Economic Development, & Tourism (DBEDT) in its partnership with community-vetted organizations like Waikā Consulting LLC to bring commercially viable geothermal development.

This measure has the potential to usher in an age of meaningful prosperity in these islands, where the oppressive cost of living is mitigated by the absence of having to pay triple the national average in energy rates, which in turn, would facilitate the growth of economic opportunities, thereby slowing the brain drain (forced economic outmigration), and keeping these islands home for those of us who have called it home for generations. Geothermal energy is the future for Hawai'i's growth.

For Ka'ū, responsible geothermal development is a beacon of hope that can level the greater disparities this community has long endured. It presents an opportunity to break cycles of economic hardship, insecurities, and systemic neglect – challenges that have contributed to the erasure of community character and identity. By harnessing a resource as powerful as geothermal, we have a unique and urgent chance to build a self-sustaining energy future that lowers costs, creates lasting economic opportunities, and reinvests directly into the well-being of our 'āina and our people. Deep beneath the surface potential for geothermal is a brilliant pathway for economic resilience, community empowerment,



and the responsible development of our communities – shaped by those who call this place home.

That future, however, must be built with deep respect for the cultural and spiritual significance of geothermal resources, particularly as they relate to Pelehonuamea (and the multitudes of other interconnected kupua, akua, and 'aumakua) and the natural-cultural interests of Native Hawaiians who familial connections to this 'āina.

Geothermal is a controversial natural-cultural resource here in these islands due to its sacred connection to tūtū Pele – geothermal and its associated phenomenon are kinolau (manifestations) of her and her mana (spiritual power). As 'ohana to Pele, I can personally attest to the fierce, fiery, and unwavering devotion with which we protect and cherish her – no less than we would any beloved elder. She is our family. How she is treated matters to us.

In the absence of our ability to freely exercise our own self-determination, Native Hawaiians have had to endure forced change and suffer the external abuses of those things that matter most to our way of life. We haven't had the chance to come together as a community, to engage in meaningful discourse, and to develop the framework for what is and what is not acceptable development. As a result, the community is often divided between the ebb and flow of a hands-on or hands-off approach to natural-cultural resource use. **We, Native Hawaiians, still need these opportunities to come together as a people and it would be nothing less than a grave injustice to deprive us of that.**

I emphasize the need to treat geothermal with the utmost sensitivity in my support of this measure because Waikā, in its partnership with DBEDT, has spent the better part of a decade engaging communities that will bear the burden of any direct impact from geothermal, and they have painstakingly worked to ensure that responsible development occurs. The foundation for this work has already been laid, and we now eagerly await the construction of the house, for which the model has already been made.

Mahalo nui loa for your time, consideration, and commitment to this vital work. I respectfully ask that this Committee pass SB1269.



LATE

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 1269 – Geothermal Energy Development on Hawai'i Island

Aloha Chair DeCoite,

I write to express my strong support for Senate Bill 1269, which seeks to restore and increase funding for the continued exploration and identification of geothermal resources on Hawai'i Island. This bill is a crucial step in advancing Hawai'i's transition to renewable energy and ensuring long-term energy security for our communities.

Geothermal energy is derived from heat stored beneath the Earth's surface and can be utilized to generate electricity as well as provide heating and cooling. This renewable resource is especially abundant on Hawai'i Island due to its geological activity, but geothermal potential is not exclusive to volcanic regions. Areas with sufficient underground heat, along with the necessary geological conditions, can also support geothermal energy development. By accessing underground steam, hot water, or geothermal fluids, energy can be extracted to drive turbines that produce electricity efficiently.

Geothermal energy is a reliable and sustainable alternative to fossil fuels and biofuels, offering a continuous power source with minimal environmental impact. Research indicates that Hawai'i Island has the highest potential for large-scale geothermal development. The initial \$6 million allocated in 2024 underscored the State's commitment to this initiative, and it is vital to restore that funding and provide additional support to ensure continued progress under the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC).

In collaboration with the University of Hawai'i, HTDC has already made strides in creating an integrated geothermal roadmap with the goal of establishing the first utility-scale geothermal power facility, capable of generating between 50 to 100 megawatts. However, without adequate funding, this initiative faces delays that could hinder research advancements, investor confidence, and the long-term viability of geothermal energy in Hawai'i. Additionally, this bill appropriately designates the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) as the lead agency for overseeing geothermal exploration. This ensures a coordinated approach that aligns research efforts with commercial viability, fostering investor confidence and reducing risks associated with geothermal development.



As a Member of Congress in the 117th Congress, I was proud to secure language in the Energy & Water appropriations bill that underscored the importance of geothermal exploration. The Committee acknowledged the growing significance of geothermal systems across the United States and their potential to produce sustainable electricity, reduce carbon emissions, and create economic opportunities. The Committee further directed the Department, in collaboration with the Department of Defense, to assess geothermal prospects, evaluating their viability for renewable, secure energy generation to meet both military and public sector needs, particularly in non-contiguous states and U.S. territories. This federal directive reinforced my long-standing commitment to advancing geothermal energy as a key component of Hawai'i's renewable energy portfolio and demonstrated bipartisan support for this critical resource.

Commercializing geothermal resources will help address Hawai'i's high energy costs and unlock new economic opportunities. By developing this resource, the State can create jobs, foster business growth, and enhance energy independence. Investing in geothermal is a step toward economic self-determination, allowing Hawai'i to control its energy future rather than relying on expensive imported fuels. Furthermore, geothermal development benefits not only the broader population but also Native Hawaiians specifically. As a renewable, locally-sourced energy, it aligns with cultural values of sustainability and stewardship of the land. By promoting economic opportunities and reducing dependence on outside energy sources, geothermal development strengthens both Native Hawaiian communities and the State as a whole.

Beyond energy production, advancing geothermal development aligns with broader state goals, including sustainability, food security, and economic resilience. Hawai'i Island's extensive agricultural and pastoral lands provide a unique opportunity to integrate energy development with land conservation and cultural stewardship. Furthermore, meaningful community engagement is essential for the success of any renewable energy initiative. The proposed funding will allow for thorough outreach efforts, ensuring that geothermal development is conducted transparently and in a way that honors the land and respects Native Hawaiian cultural values.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the legislature to pass Senate Bill 1269 and fully restore funding for geothermal energy development on Hawai'i Island. This investment is critical to Hawai'i's future, providing a clean, reliable, and locally sourced energy solution that benefits our environment and our people.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Should you require any additional information or wish to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact me.

Hau'oli Ka Mana'o,

Kaiali'i Kahele 
Member, 117th Congress

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 4:54:25 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

My name is Dawn Morais Webster and I provide communications counsel to Waika Consulting.

Waika Consulting wants to do one thing above all else: deliver power FOR the people. SB1269 will help them do that.

After days of feeling helpless, coming here to testify **in strong support of SB1269** makes me feel optimistic. This bill is a sign that we can and will take steps to make Hawai'i a better place for everyone despite all the national turbulence. The flurry of drastic actions from Washington DC over the last two weeks should not keep us from doing what is needed locally to prevent the exodus of people from our islands.

They leave because they feel they have to. Not because they want to. And why? Because living here has become intolerably expensive for ordinary working people. The people of Hawai'i island suffer the most because they pay the highest prices in the country for electricity. We need energy for EVERYTHING. In our homes, our schools, our businesses. Energy powers the economy but it cannot do that if it is not affordable.

The state's commitment to explore and develop geothermal as an alternative firm power baseload is timely. The new goal of making energy on the neighbor islands 100% renewable by 2035 speaks to our resolve to free ourselves from the crippling effects of being addicted to fossil fuels. This bill does not just make possible exploration for geothermal resources: it enables a push all the way to the building of a 50-100MW power plant.

This is not a pipe dream. Because the good news is Hawai'i has a Native Hawaiian homegrown team with access to world class partners to get it done. Waika Consulting is a Native Hawaiian company. Its parent, the Innovations Development Group (IDG), has developed geothermal energy in a community-centered way, working with some of the best in the business in New Zealand where geothermal energy is already feeding their national grid.

I began working with Innovations Development Group (IDG) providing counsel for their outreach, executive and media communications more than a decade ago. Their work of raising awareness of the potential of geothermal and how Hawai'i could benefit from it began in 2010.

And they actually did develop geothermal in New Zealand. I learned everything I know about the business from watching the Native Hawaiian team at IDG interact with their Maori client in Aotearoa as they developed the geothermal resources of the Maori Trusts. I saw the care they took to respect Maori culture, to ensure equitable long term access to the income and byproducts of geothermal. Their native-to-native model puts indigenous people at the table, making decisions about the resource that they own.

Waika will do the same here. They know the lay of the land. As Native Hawaiians they have a deep commitment to ensuring that the community benefits from the prosperity that flows from Tutu Pele's gift.

I feel fortunate to be once again working with the IDG group of companies. I look forward to learning more about all things geothermal as they pull together the best in the business from places like the University of Auckland's Geosciences department, a recognized world leader in the field.

There is no one in Hawai'i that can match the breadth of geothermal expertise that Waika Consulting has access to. Hawai'i is very fortunate to have them ready and willing to help transform our energy landscape and secure our energy independence.

Quite simply, Waika's goal is to deliver power FOR the people. Developing geothermal will support DBEDT's mission of spurring economic development.

Mahalo for hearing this bill and for moving it forward.

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:12:38 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Chung	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

This is a program already in progress and a roadmap has been completed with the goal of developing the first utility scale 50- to 100-megawatt power station on Hawaii island.

funding originally allocated by this Legislature should be restored to continue the work that has been started.

DBEDT is the proper agency & the Big Island holds the most promise.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo

Ann Chung

Testimony of
Gavin Murphy
before the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:
Tuesday Feb 4, 2025
Room 229

SB1269
Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. **Lynn DeCoite**, Vice Chair Sen. **Glenn Wakai** and Members of the **Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I cannot overstate my strong support for the bill that is before this committee: SB1269. This bill speaks to the state's determination to find real solutions to the problem of exorbitant energy prices that are an economic and social challenge for Hawaii. Nowhere is that problem more severe than on Hawaii island. Both your Governor Josh Green's new goal for attaining 100% renewable energy on the Neighbor Islands –by 2035—and this bill reflect the urgency of the search for a firm, reliable, and cost-effective baseload power source. That will allow you to deliver lower cost electricity to your constituents. You can also look to the creation of hydrogen for heavy transport fuels.

I have reviewed the detailed submissions on geothermal from various parties seeking funding from the legislature. DHHL is focused on two sites previously identified by the Waika-led work on behalf of DHHL. If the current UH \$5m geophysics research is successful they propose slim hole drilling. At that point presumably DHHL remains the developer going forward? Has that question been answered? This will require significant developer and investor negotiation capability and capacity. The Hawaii State Energy Office (HSEO) proposes drilling at multiple sites on each island for \$16 mill versus DHHL's proposed \$20 million for just two sites on Hawaii island.

The cost for a couple of sites for slim hole wells at \$20m seems high. There is also no mention of how the geophysical work and slim hole drilling will lead to a conceptual reservoir model for

commercial development. This is something investors will expect. On the other it is not at all clear what geophysical evidence HSEO has for choosing and prioritizing where it will drill.

The need for an endgame—commercial development with its ancillary benefits including all of the components that come with that, such as grid connection, long term land owner/access development agreements, economic modelling aid investor/finance structures, energy sales plans and multi hundred million dollar plant and equipment procurement plans --is something clearly planned for by Waika Consulting. Waika is the company advising DBEDT to undertake the work of exploring geothermal to foster economic development. For good reason. Waika has the experience that no other entity has to help Hawaii achieve its goals.

I know because I have had the pleasure of working closely with Waika's parent company, Innovations Development Group (IDG) to develop the geothermal assets of the Maori Trusts as CEO of the Trust Tairawhiti, 100% owner of the Eastland Group and its General Manager of Business Development and Investment. We partnered with IDG to deliver real community benefits to the Maori people, at the invitation of their Queen. I saw for myself how they implemented a model for tapping the geothermal resources underneath land owned by local Maori landowners in ways that benefitted the community while contributing firm, cost-effective, renewable energy to the national electricity grid. One plant is already operational and another is poised to go online soon.

New Zealand has over 50 years of experience developing geothermal. Geothermal does not depend on the sun shining, wind blowing or rain falling. The average emissions intensity of geothermal electricity is about one-quarter that of the cleanest natural gas-fueled power station. And New Zealand power station developers are deploying emerging technologies to capture greenhouse gases and enable their full sequestration.

With availability in the 95-98% range it is a genuine alternative as a 24/7, 365 days per year, firm, cost effective base load power. New Zealand has over 1,000MW of geothermal, with over 300MW more under development.

I saw for myself how IDG's model for development integrated cultural values into the plans for developing a geothermal plant from the ground up. We are proud of what we accomplished, working with 'mana whenua' -people of the land- respecting their culture, providing roles and project outcomes for their benefit, ensuring the health and safety of all, managing multiple contractors without harm to the community or to visitors while creating an economically viable power station supplying the grid.

We are delighted to be once again working with the IDG/Waika team to bring a similar model of development to Hawaii. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to have a plan with parallel tracks for geoscience exploration and commercial development. The end goal is a power plant that can produce 50-100 MW of power. Waika has provided just such a roadmap to DBEDT. A commercial development roadmap with defined benchmarks and timelines gives you, the legislators, insight into the process and reduces risk as much as possible before drilling. It also builds investor confidence.

Our team includes global experts. We are partnering with the world-class institution, University of Auckland's Geoscience Department Professors who are industry experts, known for its leadership in this field. Being able to draw on their practical experience in a mature geothermal market makes Waika's plans uniquely valuable to policymakers like yourself. You will see what you are getting for your investment at designated steps in the journey of exploration leading to building a power plant. That has not been done to date in Hawaii. Our track record is proof that we will deliver as promised.

SB1269 is vital to ending Hawaii's unhealthy and super expensive dependence on imported fossil fuels. This bill can empower a Native Hawaiian company like Waika to deliver the practical solutions both DBEDT and policy-makers like you seek to spur economic development and make life more affordable for the people of Hawaii. I urge you to pass SB1269.

Mahalo.

Testimony of
(Kumu) Cy Bridges

Before the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
February 4, 2025
CR229

SB1269
Relating to Geothermal Resources

Aloha e Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

‘O wau ‘o Cy Bridges, and I submit this testimony as a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner, a and kupuna of our Lāhui Hawai‘i. I write in strong support of SB1269, which seeks to appropriate funding to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) for further exploration of geothermal energy through a pono approach that acknowledges and uplifts our ‘ōiwi ‘ike, mo‘omeheu, and kuleana to our ‘āina.

For generations, our people have revered Pelehonuamea, she who shapes and reshapes our lands with her mana. She is ‘ohana – she is a living force, a kūpuna, a kumu, an elemental presence that commands our deepest aloha and respect. Geothermal energy, if approached without true ‘ike and kuleana, can be a desecration. Yet, when guided by Native Hawaiian hands, minds, and hearts, it has the potential to align with our values of mālama ‘āina and pono economic development.

The impact of this measure goes far beyond geothermal development alone – it reaches across time and space, connecting ka wā ma mua (the time before) with the ka wā ma hope (the time after), weaving the lehu lehu a mano mano, the great many and numerous who have already passed, with those here now, and those who have yet to be born.

I share my mana‘o knowing that the foundation we lay here and the policies embedded therein, will fortify the ground upon which our future will be built. I hope we build one that is strong and faultless.

My people, the Native Hawaiian people, are the original stewards of this ‘āina, and we should stand at the forefront of decisions that impact our sacred places, our natural-cultural resources, and our relationship with Pele. Waikā, the Native Hawaiian-led organization that has been selected to advise DBEDT on geothermal matters are demonstrating a commitment to this kuleana, working tirelessly to engage our communities, to listen, and to develop a model that integrates cultural respect, environmental responsibility, and energy independence.

The plight of the Native Hawaiian people is the absence of self-determination. This measure provides an opportunity to shift that narrative – to empower Native Hawaiians to lead, to ensure that any geothermal development occurs with the highest level of stewardship, and to affirm that our people must always have a decisive voice in matters concerning our sacred resources.

As a kupuna, I have witnessed the struggles of our lāhui, but I have also seen our resilience. We do not reject progress; we demand that it be done in a way that is pono, in a way that respects our past, safeguards our present, and ensures a future where our keiki and mo'opuna can stand strong upon the foundation of their ancestors. SB1269 is a step in that direction, and I urge you to support it.

Me ka ha'aha'a a me ke aloha.

Testimony of
Kumu Karl Veto Baker

Before the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday Feb 4, 2025, 1pm
Room 229

SB1269
Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen Glenn Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Tourism:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Karl Veto Baker and I am a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner and Kumu Hula for Halau I Ka Wēkiu, who holds the utmost respect and reverence for the natural world around us as inseparable strands woven into the fabric of my identity. I provide this testimony in **support** of SB1269, **which furthers the existing foundation already laid for a responsible approach toward natural-cultural resource development – geothermal – in the Hawaiian Islands that elevate and are guided by the voices of culturally rooted Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian communities.**

Kīlauea is both wahi pana (storied place) and wahi kapu (sacred place), holding immeasurable significance to the Native Hawaiian people as the home of Pele – our revered akua and kupuna of fire and creation. In the cosmogonic genealogies of countless Native Hawaiians, Pele is the very force through which these islands were brought into being, without whom they would not exist.

Pele and her volcanic domain stand as a powerful testament to the inseparable bond between our natural and cultural resources. Each natural resource and phenomenon is a kinolau (embodiment/form) of a sacred spiritual being, deeply revered in our traditions. Through these practices, we have cultivated relationships – many familial – in which we honor and live in harmony with the natural world, enriching our vast treasury of traditional ecological knowledge and cultural wisdom.

Geothermal development, by its very nature, calls upon the powerful forces of Pele and her volcanic domain. To harness the energy beneath the earth is to invoke her sacred power, a force that is inextricably linked to the land and its people. Pele’s mana, her essence, flows through the very foundation of these islands. However, such an act of

tapping into her power would be a violation, an abuse, if carried out without the leadership of her living descendants today. The responsibility to care for and honor Pele, as well as to protect the natural forces that govern our islands, belongs to the Native Hawaiians – those whose connection to Pele is both ancestral and spiritual. This deep-rooted kinship with the land and the elements carries with it an irreplaceable authority, one that must guide any action taken in Pele’s name.

Geothermal energy development, therefore, requires not just the participation of Native Hawaiians but must be led and controlled by them. The sacred stewardship of Pele’s domain is embedded in the very fabric of Native Hawaiian identity, passed down through generations, and is vital for ensuring that this energy source is developed with respect, cultural integrity, and sustainability. Native Hawaiians are the living descendants of Pele, and it is through their leadership that we can ensure that geothermal energy is not exploited but nurtured in harmony with our traditions and values. The authority to make decisions, guide practices, and safeguard the sacredness of these resources lies with the people who have the deepest, most intimate understanding of the land. Any development must be directed by Native Hawaiians to preserve both our cultural legacy and our future, ensuring that the benefits of geothermal energy are shared equitably and respectfully with all.

Mai hahaki ‘oe i ka ‘ōhelo o punia i ka ua noe (do not pluck the ‘ōhelo berries lest we be surrounded by rain and fog). Literally, the ‘ōlelo no‘eau (adage) is a warning of plucking ‘ōhelo berries on the way to Kīlauea. Figuratively, the adage serves as a lesson that in these islands, there are long-established protocols – traditions of doing things the right way. As a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner, I am constantly reminded by this ‘ōlelo no‘eau that the time-earned wisdom of the people of these islands and the respect they held for the natural world around them forms the core of Native Hawaiian identity – an identity that endures and lives on.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and attention to this matter, and I respectfully urge you to support SB1269.

Testimony of
Mililani Trask Esq.

Before the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

Tuesday Feb 4, 2025

Room 229

SB1269

Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am here to testify in strong support of SB1269. I testify as a Pele practitioner, as a lawyer who understands indigenous rights, as a Native Hawaiian who lives on Hawaii island and as an owner of the geothermal resources of our state. In Hawaii, geothermal is a mineral by definition and under our Statehood Act it belongs to Native and native Hawaiians.

I have seen up close how the high cost of energy—the highest in the nation—has stifled economic growth and limited opportunities for the next generation. It's no wonder so many are fleeing our island homes for the continent. They have been priced out of paradise. This bill is a chance to reverse this trend by making life in Hawaii more affordable and secure. We owe it to future generations to responsibly steward the gifts of Tutu Pele. Developing geothermal energy can lift up the community by lowering energy costs and creating opportunities for new businesses and education.

I'm here today to ask you to move SB1269 forward in the name of economic sustainability. I am an advisor to Waika Consulting, formed by IDG, in response to the state's initiative to, not just locate geothermal energy, but to TAP IT and DEVELOP it for use by residents and businesses.

Energy fuels the economy. DBEDT exists to further economic development for Hawaii's growth and diversification. Waika was chosen to advise DBEDT because DBEDT recognizes that this is a Hawaii-based, Native Hawaiian company that has already worked with global experts to not just

identify the best places to tap geothermal energy: It has actually developed geothermal projects for the Maori Trusts in Aotearoa.

If we are to reach the new goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035 for the Neighbor Islands, we cannot approach geothermal development as if we are looking for a needle in a haystack! We have to be strategic in how we use the dedicated funds to deliver practical solutions. That means building on what we have already learned about the geothermal resources on Hawaii island to deliver real benefits to people who are hurting.

In 2011, IDG was short-listed for the final award of a 25MW geothermal power plant by HELCO/HECO. But no award was made. If you review the Hu'ena Power/IDG PUC docket, you can assess our capacity. We are comprised of Hawaiians working with others in & outside Hawaii. Our team provided extensive analysis in that PUC docket including a Road Map for geothermal development as the primary source of baseload energy for the state. Our team knows how to deliver community benefits because it has done so in Aotearoa and has been working in Hawaii to explore geothermal development for 15 years.

Our model for developing indigenous resources in a culturally respectful way has its roots in my relationship with the late Maori Queen while working at the United Nations on the Declaration for Indigenous Human Rights. I had the honor of advising the Maori Trusts in New Zealand at the request of their late Queen, Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the creation and use of our native-to-native model. It prioritizes long term benefits to the community over limited short-term payouts. Too often outside developers have been free to exploit the indigenous owners of geothermal resources. The Hawaiian and Maori people have many shared cultural values. One critical cultural difference is that geothermal for Hawaiians is sacred to the Goddess Pele. The Native Hawaiian-owned IDG Group got involved with several projects from the planning and consultation stages right through to development. Each project reflected our native-to-native approach: shared profits, low environmental impact, cultural protections and long-term benefits to the host communities.

IDG has kept abreast of the latest developments in both the science AND economics of geothermal development. We bring the same business acumen, legal and scientific expertise and cultural sensitivity that we applied In New Zealand to deliver for the people of Hawaii. We will support the kind of economic development DBEDT is dedicated to promoting. Waika Consulting, under the umbrella of the IDG Group, has already identified leading global experts in the field of geothermal energy. Far from doing research just for the sake of research, SB1269 will allow for the commercial development of geothermal. That includes supporting community-centered projects that are socially responsible, environmentally sustainable, culturally appropriate and economically feasible.

As a Pele practitioner, I truly believe tapping the gifts of Tūtū Pele for the benefit of the people is an act of homage to her abundant generosity. The people of Hawaii island—and eventually all of Hawaii-- will benefit. Our indigenous geothermal resources, which are owned by Indigenous Hawaiians and the public, can and should be a firm power alternative to destructive fossil fuels that have cost us too much already. And they threaten to cost us billions more in damage to our coastal infrastructure. We have a firm power alternative right here in our back yard. Let's tap it.

For the sake of economic growth and opportunities for future generations, please move SB1269 forward.

Mahalo.

SB-1269

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 8:27:16 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism,

I am testifying in opposition to this bill.

I understand the need to find an environmentally friendly alternative to energy production, but I do not think geothermal energy is our answer. Unlike wind, solar, or wave energy generation, geothermal requires permanent damage and desecration to the environment. The drilling into the ‘āina, once done, can’t be undone.

In Hawaiian culture, the surface of the ground is sometimes seen as a body form of our goddess Papahānaumoku. To drill into the ground would be to desecrate parts of her, while if wind, solar, or even wave energy generation was pursued, all the structures would be temporary and merely sit on the surface (or in the ocean).

I would request that out of respect for Hawaiian cultural values and beliefs, Hawaii not pursue geothermal energy generation. We live in the perfect environment for innovations in renewable energy technology. Let Hawaii become a leader in new techniques and technologies in this field, push forth the field at University of Hawaii, and learn from international leaders of energy technology. As the committee on both Economic Development and Tourism, being the leader in innovative green energy creation would both be an economic driver as well as an attraction for the type of tourists that we want to see coming to our islands. It is not far fetched to think that we could have tourism conferences and tours featuring innovative technologies and the implementation of these new technologies. With an all-year nearly-perfect weather, we have the opportunity to develop new technologies that the world can use.

When the City and County of Honolulu decided to build the rail system, it was already an older technology, and when it is finally finished, it’ll be outdated and inefficient compared to similar technologies at the time. Let’s not do that with renewable energies. Let’s not invest in old technologies like geothermal and large windmills. Let’s look to future innovations that will be culturally sensitive, more efficient, less disruptive, and easily accepted by the people it may affect.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:10:46 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Currently, the Kilauea East Rift Zone on Hawaii Island is the only geothermal system in the Hawaiian archipelago from which geothermal electric power is being produced. Preliminary research by the Hawaii Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center (HGGRC) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa shows that all of the major Hawaiian Islands hold geothermal potential and that much of Hawaii's geothermal resources is unknown. HGGRC should execute the geothermal resource characterization under the administrative oversight of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. Doing so will enable the State to further benefit from HGGRC's research and expertise.

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 6:43:10 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Roney deYoung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii needs to take all steps possible to create energy independence. Geothermal is an obvious and proven technology globally.

we continue to burn oil, and go into brownouts which is unacceptable for health and safety. Solar takes precious land in areas with roads and electrical access. Wind also uses land and threatens our birds. All have downsides, but the amount of power per acre that geothermal can produce is much higher than either other alternative AND can SCALE to larger production with much less impact on the land.

Geothermal could also produce additional energy beyond our electrical needs and fuel production of hydrogen clean fuel locally, sustainable aviation fuel (which we will need in the future for air travel) and even power AI data centers and bit coin production generating cash for Hawaii.

Independence from dependance on the continent and Sustainable malama aina choices for our Islands are in the best interest of our people of Hawaii. Please support taking this bill forward.

Beth Roney DeYoung; Hilo, Hawaii

Testimony of
Malama Solomon Ph.D.
Before the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:
Tuesday Feb 4, 2025
Room 229

SB1269
Relating to Geothermal Resources

Chair Sen. [Lynn DeCoite](#), Vice Chair Sen. [Glenn Wakai](#) and Members of the [Committee on Economic Development and Tourism](#):

Aloha mai kākou,

I am here as your former colleague and member of the Hawaii Senate. I am also here as a Native Hawaiian who has long advocated for the development of our indigenous resources in a manner respectful of our culture to deliver real benefits to all the people of Hawaii. Too many of our people are being driven out of the islands because life here is intolerably expensive.

That is why I am here to put on record my strong support for [SB1269](#). It is time we moved with urgency to tap the gifts of Tutu Pele to make life better and more affordable for all.

We are blessed with abundant geothermal resources. Governor Green has announced an accelerated deadline for the Neighbor Islands to reach the goal of 100% renewable energy. Geothermal, unlike wind and solar, can be a firm power alternative to fossil fuels. We are currently still addicted to fossil fuels. That addiction costs us billions every year. Over 95% of our energy costs are for imported petroleum. I remember reading a commentary by [Senators Rhoads and Lee](#) a few years back that cited Hawaii's Climate Commission estimation that there will be over \$19 billion in losses in the years to come because of the destructive impact of fossil fuels on coastal infrastructure.

It does not have to be this way. We have options.

Between 2011 and 2017, Innovations Development Group (IDG) led the way in raising awareness of the vital importance of geothermal energy, equipping both the general public and policy-makers with their cultural knowledge, awareness of community needs, and insights from their experience in New Zealand.

IDG has since set up Waika Consulting, which has been selected by DBEDT and the HTDC to explore where and how we can tap into our geothermal resources. DBEDT's goal, as you well know, is to spur economic development. Energy is key to economic development. Without affordable energy our people cannot live comfortably and start and grow new businesses. It's that simple. In all my decades of living on Hawaii island and watching geosciences research being conducted, I never saw it done with a view to embarking on commercial development of geothermal energy. That's what makes Waika's approach different from any other.

That is why IDG's track record of delivering real benefits to the Maori Trusts in New Zealand whose geothermal assets they helped develop is so important and valuable to Hawaii. We must make the most of their experience. There is no other Native Hawaiian entity other than IDG, parent company of Waika, that understands and has the practical knowledge of how to implement a community-centered model of geothermal development.

The people on Hawaii island especially have had to deal for too long with electricity costs that are the highest in the nation. It has been painful for businesses and ordinary ratepayers.

Exploring how and where we can tap into the energy of Tūtū Pele will put us on the road to reducing that pain. This bill SB1269 can make that happen. It can help meet DBEDT's mission of encouraging economic development. The byproducts of geothermal development will feed small businesses and lower energy costs for all.

Ending our expensive dependence on destructive fossil fuels by actually developing our indigenous geothermal resources as a firm power alternative will go a long way towards lifting up the community. It will put Hawaii on the road to prosperity through energy independence. Please move SB1269 forward.

LATE

SB-1269

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:18:13 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/4/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for hearing this bill to continue the research needed to pursue geothermal development as an alternative to the burning of expensive and environmentally damaging fossil fuels. I am a long time supporter of geothermal but recognize the need for additional research. Please move this measure forward and provide needed funding as an investment in a healthier future for Hawai'i that could also significantly reduce the cost of living.

Patti Cook 808-937-2833 Waimea, Island of Hawai'i