

HB2058 HD1

EDT



NATURAL ENERGY LABORATORY OF HAWAII AUTHORITY

An Attached Agency of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, State of Hawaii



Statement of
RON BAIRD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
March 31, 2010
1:45 PM
State Capitol Conference Room 016

in consideration of
HB 2058 HD1 RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY

Chair Fukunaga, Vice-Chair Baker, and members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Technology, I am Ron Baird Chief Executive Officer of the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority, located in Kailua-Kona on the great island of Hawaii.

HB 2058, HD1 amends the NELHA authorization statute to allow NELHA to grant or issue concessions for cell phone communication towers. NELHA has managed to be self-sufficient in terms of operating needs for the past five years. This has required the implementation of creative strategies as well as the realignment of traditional revenue and cost-offset sources.

As NELHA continues to strive for self-sufficiency, yet having to provide tenant subsidies to help keep companies in business and expand, it needs every revenue source possibly available to it. Verizon has operated a cell phone tower at NELHA for many years as the NELHA location is one of the very best in west Hawaii for such an endeavor, providing a clear wide range of access. Revenues from this activity literally require no labor on NELHA's behalf, unlike the intensive 24/7 seawater delivery operation for aquacultural tenants. With a staff half the size it was a few years ago, a seawater delivery system twice as large and with twice as many tenants, NELHA has and does appreciate the Verizon operation.

NELHA has been approached by four or five other cell phone operators wanting to locate towers at NELHA. However, the current definition of concession has made it impractical with our small staff to pursue these "revenue-with-no-cost" potential sources. The amended definition proposed in HB 2058 HD1 will definitely simplify and facilitate the development of this positive revenue source. It has been suggested to me that the Bill be amended to render it very clear that concessions for cell towers can be entered into by NELHA with non-governmental entities. Perhaps taking the language on lines 7 and 8, page 2 and inserting the same at line 15 page 1 would accomplish this.

NELHA supports the passage of this Bill into an Act as NELHA believes it will make a significant positive economic impact on NELHA's future.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my testimony and if you have any questions, I would be happy to take and answer them now to the best of my ability.



Dan Youmans
President –Washington/Hawaii
External Affairs

AT&T Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 97061
RTC1
Redmond, WA 98073-9761

T: 425-580-1833
F: 425-580-8652
daniel.youmans@att.com
www.att.com

March 31, 2010

The Honorable Senator Carol Fukunaga
Chair, Committee on Economic Development and Technology
Hawaii State Senate

*RE: Support for House Bill 2058 HD1
Hearing 1:45 p.m., Wednesday, March 31*

Dear Senator Fukunaga and Members of the Committee:

AT&T strongly urges the Committee on Economic Development and Technology to support House Bill 2058 HD 1. This important bill will allow the Natural Energy Laboratory of the Hawaii Authority to sublease land for cell towers. AT&T would very much like the opportunity to utilize this land to improve our cellular phone service for our customers.

Wireless has become a critical communications tool for many people. In fact, about 90 percent of the U.S. population now uses cellular service. In Hawaii, wireless service is very important to both residents and visitors. Families are using mobile communications to stay in touch, while businesses rely on cellular service to work more productively.

Most importantly, cellular service has become a vital public safety tool during emergencies. However, wireless customers can't use these important devices unless they can connect to our network. Having additional options available to us to construct cell towers, especially where coverage does not exist today, is critical to providing these services to our customers.

Please support House Bill 2058 HD 1 to help us provide the best service possible to our customers and your constituents.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Youmans
AT&T