



Bill No. 2451
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

January 28, 2010, 9:00 A.M.

Room 325

25 COPIES REQUESTED

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2451, SUGGESTED AMENDMENT

Chair Morita and members of the Committee:

The Blue Planet Foundation supports HB 2451, a measure to provide priority processing to net zero energy homes. Priority processing of permits for net zero energy homes—sending them to the front of the permitting line—is an easy, no-cost incentive to encourage more smart energy homes.

A net zero energy home (ZEH) is one that—on balance—generates as much energy as it uses. Some homes in Hawai'i are already ZEH. Blue Planet's "Hawai'i Home Energy Makeover" TV special demonstrated how one home in Kalihi Valley eliminated their energy bill by making energy efficiency improvements and installing photovoltaic energy. More and more homes will be moving toward net zero energy as the clean energy technology improves and the price of fossil-based electricity increases. But even with today's technology, a net zero energy home can provide immediate positive cash flow to the homeowner at today's energy prices when the electricity cost is combined with the mortgage cost.

On O'ahu, there are several ZEHs that have been completed or are being planned. Up to five new ZEH duplexes are being built by Actus Lend Lease at Schofield Barracks, two new and one retrofit ZEH are being built by Forest City, and the Department of Hawaiian Homelands is preparing to break ground on 18 ZEHs for the Kaupuni Village project.

Blue Planet recommends amending the proposed definition of "net zero energy building" to clearly define the length of time over which the net zero energy will be calculated (production minus consumption). Further, while we support zero carbon emissions from homes, the definition may be too narrow, depending on how literally it is construed.

Through this policy, Hawai'i will benefit from a reduction in the projected energy demand with minimal additional costs to the state. Further, this policy should encourage the growth of local energy efficiency and renewable energy capacities in the development and construction industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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