

# SENATOR RUSSELL RUDERMAN

JANUARY 2013



Serving Hawai'i's  
Senate District 2

Kea'au, Pahoa,  
Kalapana,  
Kapoho,  
Kurtistown,  
Mountain View,  
Glenwood,  
Volcano,  
Pahala



## **LEGISLATIVE GOALS FOR 2013**

*“Aloha! Bill introduction here at the Hawai'i State Legislature is over and I'd like to share the bills I've introduced this session. I'll be working hard for you in the State Senate to bring infrastructure dollars to our district, to boost rural economic development and assist our small farmers, expand access to higher education opportunities, support sensible, low-cost and low-impact renewable energy development, and protect Hawaii's precious near-shore coral reefs. In addition to co-sponsoring many measures from other Senators, I've introduced the following bills.”*

### **INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR THE DISTRICT**

#### ***“Fuel tax revenues for private road maintenance” (SB382)***

would permit the County of Hawai'i to appropriate a portion of fuel tax revenue funds for the maintenance of subdivision roads that are used by the public. This would benefit everyone using these

roads, in particular those who are currently “double-hit” with community association dues in addition to the tax at the pump.

***“2013 Capital Improvement Projects.” (SB377)*** My appropriation wish list for the district includes funding requests for road improvements for Hwy 130, the Puna Community Medical Center, Po-

hoiki Park Swim Area, albizia control, and a new elementary school for Hawaiian Paradise Park.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY: SENSIBLE, LOW-COST & LOW-IMPACT**

***“Utility interconnection & grid saturation cap” (SB366)*** would remove barriers to PV by requiring the utility – not homeowners – to pay for any interconnection study for 10kW or smaller systems to hook up to the grid.

***“Virtual net-metering” (SB379)*** is a proposal to allow renters or property owners to purchase solar electricity at an offsite location and



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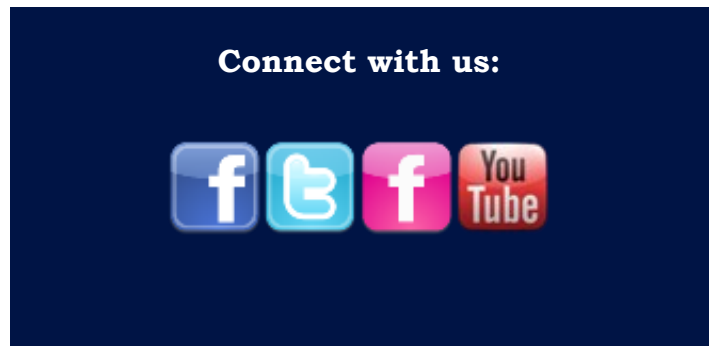
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receive credit to their meter and utility bill for the renewable energy produced at the remote location. This would expand access to solar power and extend this opportunity to those who currently can't take advantage of it.

**“Solar loan guarantee program & revolving fund” (SB368)** would allow homeowners to secure a loan guarantee from the State for loans made for solar energy devices, including PV and solar water heating. This would make solar investments available to lower- and middle- income households, lowering their energy costs.

**“Biodiesel-Blended Fuel” (SB372)** will require increasing levels of biodiesel in all on-road diesel sold in Hawai'i starting from a B5 blend in 2015 to a B20 blend in 2025. Unlike ethanol, biodiesel is being produced in Hawai'i and these blended rates do not harm engines.

**“Repeal of Act 97 – Geothermal Development” (SB371).** Act 97 passed in 2012 as a way to fast-track geothermal development in Hawai'i. It stripped the Counties of land use control and opened all lands in the State to geothermal development. Repealing Act 97 will return control to the county and community, and strengthen home rule.

**“Fracking Prohibition” (SB375)** would ban any hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) in Hawai'i until proper oversight and permitting are established. Fracking can inject harmful chemicals into the earth and has been linked to earthquakes, groundwater pollution, and other impacts

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### EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**“UH-Hilo Learning Center Needs Assessment” (SB380)** would provide a needs assessment conducted by the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource Management at UHH for a higher education learning center in Puna. This effort will advance

development of agricultural production and processing businesses in the district and support entrepreneurs and new job creation in Puna and Ka'u.

**“Charter School Funding” (SB362)** would create a uniform formula and parity for funding of charter school facilities. This bill would direct the board of education, DOE and the charter school commission to develop the formula.

## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORTING FARMERS

**“Sustainable Living Research Code” (SB361)** is a proposal that would allow innovative practices, designs and technologies for community development, natural resource conservation, soil improvement, building practices, food, timber, water and energy production, material conservation and onsite waste management. These innovations are often pioneered by alternative communities.

**“Family Farm Income Tax Break” (SB363)** would give an income tax exemption on the first \$50,000 in annual income to individuals earning their primary income from farming.

**“Legalizing Raw Milk” (SB364)** would allow retailers, distributors and producers to sell whole, unpasteurized milk, subject to rules by the Department of Agriculture to protect against food-borne illness.

**“Direct Farm to Consumer Food Sales” and “Home-based Food Production and Sales” (SB373 and SB367)** would exempt producers of unprocessed Hawai'i grown agricultural products from Department of Health rules when selling directly to the consumer, and allow home based baking businesses to sell food items directly to consumers provided certain conditions are met.

**“Tax on Seed Exports” (SB365)** would eliminate the exemption to the GET tax currently extended to GMO seed export crops grown in Hawaii, and is valued at over \$225,000,000 of gross income a year.

**“Protection of Agriculture Products against Invasive Species” (SB370)** requires a permit from the Department of Agriculture to import, introduce, or develop any new species of genetically engineered organism. The department would conduct a public hearing to determine whether to grant a permit.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**“Aquarium Fish Collection Ban” (SB374)** would prohibit the taking of reef fish for sale for aquarium purposes

## GOOD GOVERNMENT

**“Public Election Funding Pilot Program; Amendments” (SB381)** This bill adjusts Big Island's public funding pilot project based on voter feedback. It changes the funding formula for County Council races to the average amount of money spent by winning candidates in the last two election cycles across all county district races, resulting in equal funds for all districts.

**“Neighbor Island Video Testimony” (SB369)** would require both chambers of the legislature to implement rules to permit residents to present testimony through audiovisual technology. This year, a project is being piloted in the Senate Education and Technology Committees *to test this innovation, more of which can be read at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/videoconf.aspx>*

## ADEQUATE & SAFE ACCESS TO MEDICAL CANNABIS

**“Medical Marijuana Program Amendments” (SB1218)** Would amend the definition of "adequate supply" of medical marijuana by increasing the maximum number of mature marijuana plants from three to twenty-one and remove the limitation of four immature marijuana plants. Transfers all rights, powers, functions, and duties of the Department of Public Safety relating to the medical use of marijuana under chapter 329, part IX, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to the Department of Health.

## VOICE YOUR OPINION AND GET INVOLVED!

*“I encourage you to get involved by following legislation and providing testimony on these and other issues by 1.) Registering at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/login/register.aspx> 2.) Tracking bills and subscribing to hearing notices you are interested in, and 3) providing testimony! As always, please feel free to contact me at anytime to voice your concerns about our district and island home.”*

*Mahalo nui loa,*



Senator Russell E. Ruderman

