

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
465 S. KING STREET, #103
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

JON S. ITOMURA
CHAIR

NAOMI U. KUWAYE
COMMISSIONER

COLIN A. YOST
COMMISSIONER

Telephone: (808) 586-2020
Facsimile: (808) 586-2066

Website: puc.hawaii.gov
E-mail: puc@hawaii.gov

Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the
Senate Committees on
Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs
and
Agriculture & Environment

Friday, March 27, 2026
3:00 p.m.

Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Chang and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

Measure: S.C.R. 95 / S.R. 90

Title: REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF LARGE DATA CENTERS ON HAWAII'S ELECTRIC UTILITIES, RATEPAYERS, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND CLIMATE GOALS.

Position:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

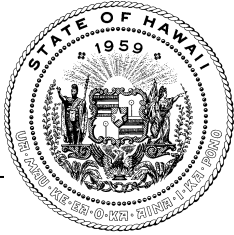
Comments:

The Commission recognizes that Hawaii's isolated island grids are uniquely sensitive to large new electricity loads, given the absence of interconnections with neighboring systems and the State's 100% Renewable Portfolio Standard by 2045. Without appropriate safeguards, data center development could require costly grid upgrades, strain clean energy progress, and shift financial burdens onto existing residential and small-business ratepayers, all core concerns within the Commission's regulatory jurisdiction.

The Commission appreciates its inclusion in the proposed working group and stands ready to contribute expertise on tariff design, large load interconnection standards, integrated resource planning, and grid reliability. The Commission also respectfully suggests that the working group consider the following additional policy options:

(1) Establishing a clear MW-threshold definition of “large” data center; (2) requiring data centers to maintain sufficient on-site backup power and energy storage systems to reduce grid dependency and enable automatic load curtailment during grid emergencies, protecting the stability of Hawaii’s island electric system; (3) requiring annual public reporting of actual electricity consumption, water usage, and greenhouse gas emissions, verified by an independent third party, to ensure transparency and accountability for regulators and the public; (4) requiring an independent water resource impact assessment prior to permit issuance, together with a detailed water conservation plan to protect Hawaii’s water resources; and (5) linking working group findings directly to utility Integrated Grid Planning processes under Commission oversight.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

235 South Beretania Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone:
Web:

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARK B. GLICK
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

(808) 451-6648
energy.hawaii.gov

Testimony of

MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the

**SENATE COMMITTEES ON
ENERGY & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Friday, March 27, 2026

3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

Providing Comments

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 90

REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF LARGE DATA CENTERS ON HAWAII'S ELECTRIC UTILITIES, RATEPAYERS, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND CLIMATE GOALS.

Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Chang and Richards, and Members of the Committees, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) offers comments on Senate Resolution No. 90, which requests the Hawaii State Energy Office to convene a working group to study the potential impacts of large data centers on Hawaii's electric utilities, ratepayers, natural resources, and climate goals.

The potential for rapid growth of large-scale and hyperscale data centers is raising significant energy and community concerns nationally given that these

Hawai'i State Energy Office

**SR 90 - REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO CONVENE A
WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF LARGE DATA
CENTERS ON HAWAII'S ELECTRIC UTILITIES, RATEPAYERS, NATURAL
RESOURCES, AND CLIMATE GOALS – Comments**

March 27, 2026

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facilities are in great demand and require extremely large quantities of continuous electricity. When energy demand goes well beyond existing infrastructure and supplies, costly upgrades are necessary that may increase rates for residents and small businesses if not properly allocated and procured. In addition, data centers can place pressure on limited resources such as water for cooling and create land use and environmental trade-offs for local communities.

While Hawai'i's electricity prices remain among the highest in the nation and grid resource capacity and power plant readiness is less than ideal, the potential for data center growth in Hawai'i may be limited. For the time being, HSEO has been reaching out to stakeholders including the public utilities commission and utilities on current activities to assess industry interest in Hawai'i as a location for data centers and ongoing activities in existing regulatory proceedings such as the integrated grid plan. HSEO is also engaging with the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) who conducts a Powering Up Data Centers webinar series which explores strategies for state energy offices to manage the rapid growth of data center energy demand while maintaining grid reliability and affordability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SR-90

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 2:48:19 PM

Testimony for EIG on 3/27/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

SR-90

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 6:22:13 PM

Testimony for EIG on 3/27/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes I support a working group to study the impact of data centers. AI is not always a positive move forward especially with the impact on the environment and the massive amount of water required to function these centers. Just because it is the wave of our future, we should never just follow the trend but instead always keep in mind the health and well being of our ‘aina and our kanaka. Protecting our islands should be of utmost importance.

Julia Estigoy-Kaho‘onei

Moku o Keawe