



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

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Monday, March 2, 2026  
10:31 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In Support of  
**SENATE BILL NO. 3081, SD1**  
**RELATING TO A PROGRAM TO CHARACTERIZE THE POTENTIAL OF  
UNDERGROUND ENERGY RESOURCES STATEWIDE.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee, the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports SB 3081, SD1, as a priority DBEDT and Administration measure to accelerate Hawai'i's energy transition. SB 3081, SD1, aligns with DBEDT's Economy for Resilience framework, which prioritizes firm renewable energy, economic diversification, infrastructure readiness, and long-term cost stability for Hawai'i residents and businesses. Characterizing underground geothermal and carbon sequestration resources is a foundational investment that strengthens energy security, reduces imported fuel dependency, and supports sustainable economic growth across multiple sectors including agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and the blue economy. If appropriately funded, SB 3081, SD1, would help the state reach its energy self-sufficiency targets and increase affordability by enabling DBEDT to administer a statewide Geothermal Resources Characterization Program through HSEO and supported by the Hawai'i Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center at the University of Hawai'i.

Conducting research via slim-hole test wells is a high priority of Hawai'i's updated energy strategy because of the potential to clearly identify where geothermal resources might exist, with a focus on Maui, Hawai'i, and O'ahu. The ultimate goal is to stimulate private sector investment in producing safe, reliable, and affordable firm renewable energy that can make Hawai'i energy self-sufficient and reduce electricity costs and carbon emissions. This exploration would inform DBEDT, the Public Utilities Commission, and other policymakers about how far geothermal can take Hawai'i towards meeting its 100% renewable portfolio targets on Maui, Hawai'i and O'ahu. From an economic development standpoint, this initiative reduces exploration risk, improves market transparency, and creates conditions necessary for private capital deployment in firm renewable energy infrastructure. By lowering uncertainty through state-sponsored characterization, Hawai'i can reduce risk premiums embedded in future power purchase agreements, thereby lowering long-term electricity costs and improving business competitiveness statewide.

The measure will also inform where underground water resources can be found and the longer-term potential for subsurface carbon sequestration. Further provisions provide accountability and transparency through HSEO's preparation and submission of a progress report to the Legislature with research outcomes and any proposed legislation emanating from the research findings. The data generated through this program also supports broader resilience objectives. Improved understanding of subsurface water temperatures and geological conditions may inform agricultural irrigation planning, food security initiatives, and future industrial applications that rely on reliable energy and water access. This integrated resource mapping strengthens Hawai'i's long-term land use and infrastructure planning.

To effectively and responsibly conduct this statewide resource characterization effort, DBEDT supports the appropriation of no less than \$6,000,000 from the Energy Security Special Fund, as provided in the measure. This investment is strategic in

nature and designed to catalyze significantly larger private sector investment while preserving fiscal discipline by reducing long-term procurement and ratepayer risk.

This measure is informed by HSEO's analysis of market gaps in firm renewable resources and long duration storage, especially geothermal and pumped hydro. Hawai'i is fortunate to have subsurface heat from geothermal energy remaining from Earth's formation that is stored in rocks and fluids. Through deep wells, the heat can be brought to the surface as steam to drive turbines that generate electricity. However, it is not economically feasible to procure geothermal development through the competitive bidding process without first providing evidence of geothermal potential in specific locations. Without such evidence, developers must drill multiple, costly exploration wells with the risk that they may not discover a reliable geothermal resource, if they decide to participate at all. The uncertainty is passed on to ratepayers via a risk premium added to the developer's bid. This measure would mitigate the risk premium and increase production royalties to Hawai'i through State-sponsored slim-hole research that first identifies locations where hot water is sufficient for electric power generation. Hawai'i's renewable portfolio standard requires not only variable renewable resources such as solar and wind, but also firm, dispatchable renewable energy to stabilize the grid and avoid continued reliance on imported fossil fuels. Geothermal represents one of the few scalable, in-state firm renewable options available. Advancing characterization now ensures Hawai'i maintains optionality in its future energy mix.

In addition to the economic development and energy self-sufficiency benefits of geothermal, geothermal offers the least land-intensive renewable energy resource option in Hawai'i and the Center for Strategic and International Studies credits modern geothermal power plants as having insignificant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with life-cycle emissions six to twenty times lower than natural gas and four times lower than solar photovoltaic (PV) energy due to the materials used to construct the plants.

Concurrently, HSEO will engage energy stakeholders at the community level during 2026 and beyond to gain insight on how and where geothermal development can appropriately take place in ways that meaningfully benefit the affected communities. DBEDT recognizes that community engagement, cultural consultation, and environmental review under Chapter 343, HRS, are essential components of responsible development. SB 3081, SD1, appropriately requires environmental assessment or environmental impact review prior to development activities and mandates annual reporting to the Legislature, ensuring transparency and legislative oversight.

Given the importance of firm renewable energy in achieving Hawai'i's decarbonization, affordability, and energy independence goals, government-supported resource characterization is a prudent first step in advancing the State's Economy for Resilience strategy. With appropriate funding, SB 3081, SD1, provides the data-driven foundation necessary to unlock private investment, strengthen grid reliability, and position Hawai'i for long-term economic stability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair**  
**Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**  
Committee on Ways and Means

Monday, March 2, 2026  
10:31AM Conference Room 211

RE: SB3081 SD1 Geothermal / Identification of Underground Energy Resources -  
Oppose

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Chamber of Sustainable Commerce, we submit this testimony to oppose SB3081 SD1. The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents more than 580 small businesses, entrepreneurs, creatives, and sole proprietors across Hawai'i committed to a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity.

While we support thoughtful, community-driven renewable energy planning, this measure establishes a new Underground Energy Resource Characterization Program within the Hawai'i State Energy Office to identify geothermal heat and carbon sequestration resources statewide using slim-hole bores. Even if characterized as "modest" exploration, these activities are not neutral. They signal state endorsement and advance infrastructure groundwork for future geothermal expansion before clear community consent, cumulative impact analysis, and long-term water protection safeguards are fully resolved.

Geothermal development on Hawai'i Island—has long raised serious concerns related to groundwater safety, seismic activity, cultural resources, Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and community health. This bill directs the State to proceed with additional slim-hole characterization wells and, upon finding a viable resource, to seek funding for environmental review. That sequencing is backwards. Exploration itself carries risk and shapes future land use trajectories. Environmental review and meaningful consultation should precede—not follow—state-funded exploration activity.

Additionally, the bill appropriates funds from the Energy Security Special Fund at a time when our communities face pressing needs in affordable housing, food security, small business stabilization, grid resilience, rooftop solar access, and energy efficiency for local families. Public dollars should prioritize distributed, community-owned renewable solutions that keep wealth circulating locally, reduce household energy burden, and do not place aquifers or culturally sensitive lands at risk.

[www.ChamberofSustainableCommerce.org](http://www.ChamberofSustainableCommerce.org)

## Hawaii Legislative Council Members

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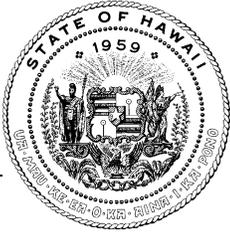
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Energy development must align with precaution, transparency, and community governance. Large-scale geothermal expansion—particularly when advanced through state-led resource characterization—can create long-term land use commitments that benefit outside capital interests more than local businesses and residents. Hawai'i's clean energy transition should strengthen small-scale, cooperative, and community-based energy models rather than centralizing extraction-based infrastructure.

We urge the Legislature to pause this program and instead invest in grid modernization that integrates distributed rooftop and balcony/plug-in solar and storage, community-owned and directed renewable cooperatives, and transparent, island-specific energy planning processes grounded in cultural and environmental stewardship. Energy security must not come at the expense of water security, cultural integrity, or community trust.

Respectfully submitted.



# HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Testimony of  
**MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Monday, March 2, 2026  
10:31 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

In Support of  
**SENATE BILL NO. 3081, SD1**

**RELATING TO A PROGRAM TO CHARACTERIZE THE POTENTIAL OF UNDERGROUND  
ENERGY RESOURCES STATEWIDE.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) strongly supports Senate Bill No. 3081, SD1 as a priority Administration measure to accelerate Hawai'i's energy transition and stimulate economic development throughout the state. If appropriately funded, SB 3081, SD1 would enable the HSEO to administer a statewide Geothermal Resources Characterization Program supported by the Hawai'i Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center at the University of Hawai'i.

Conducting research via slim-hole test wells is a high priority of Hawai'i's updated energy strategy because of the potential to clearly identify where geothermal resources might exist, with a focus on Maui, Hawai'i, and O'ahu. The ultimate goal is to stimulate private sector investment in producing safe, reliable, and affordable firm renewable energy that can make Hawai'i energy self-sufficient, reduce electricity costs and carbon emissions, and create jobs. HSEO's updated energy strategy indicates that better understanding of the location of geothermal potential greatly improves the potential to meet the 100% renewable portfolio targets on Maui, Hawai'i, and possibly even O'ahu.

The measure will also inform where underground water resources can be found and the longer-term potential for subsurface carbon sequestration. Further provisions provide accountability and transparency through HSEO's preparation and submission of a progress report to the Legislature with research outcomes and any proposed legislation emanating from the research findings.

To effectively and broadly conduct this research, HSEO requests no less than \$6,000,000 to carry out this program, an amount that would enable up to two slim-hole wells.

This measure is informed by HSEO's analysis of market gaps in firm renewable resources and long duration storage, especially geothermal and pumped hydro. Hawai'i is fortunate to have subsurface heat from geothermal energy remaining from Earth's formation that is stored in rocks and fluids. Through deep wells, the heat can be brought to the surface as steam to drive turbines that generate electricity. However, it is not economically feasible to procure geothermal development through the competitive bidding process without first providing evidence of geothermal potential in specific locations. Without such evidence, developers must drill multiple, costly exploration wells with the risk that they may not discover a reliable geothermal resource, if they decide to participate at all. The uncertainty is passed on to ratepayers via a risk premium added to the developer's bid. This measure would mitigate the risk premium and increase production royalties to Hawai'i through State-sponsored slim-hole research that first identifies locations where hot water is sufficient for electric power generation.

In addition to the economic development and energy self-sufficiency benefits of geothermal, the Center for Strategic and International Studies credits modern geothermal power plants as having insignificant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with life-cycle emissions six to twenty times lower than natural gas and four times lower than solar photovoltaic (PV) energy due to the materials used to construct the plants.

Concurrently, HSEO will engage energy stakeholders at the community level during 2026 and beyond to gain insight on how and where geothermal development can appropriately take place in ways that meaningfully benefit the affected communities.

Given the importance of geothermal in helping Hawai'i meet its firm renewable needs, government support to identify areas of geothermal potential is an appropriate first step towards incentivizing private sector investment and development of state-of-the-art geothermal resources. With the appropriate level of funding, SB 3081, SD1 would provide that needed support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Monday, March 2, 2026 — 10:31 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 3081 SD1, Relating to a Program to Characterize the Potential of Underground Energy Resources Statewide.**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports SB 3081 SD1**, which establishes the Underground Energy Resources Characterization Program to identify the location and characteristics of underground energy resources through the use of slim-hole bores and requires a related environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Hawai'i needs all viable forms of renewable energy to meet the 100% renewable portfolio standard by 2045. New data underscores the widespread support among residents for this transition. Between October 2023 and January 2024, Ulupono Initiative partnered with Anthology Research to conduct a statewide public opinion survey on energy in Hawai'i involving 1,985 surveys across all four counties. With a margin of error +/- 2.21%, this is arguably the most extensive and comprehensive study on the topic to date. The findings are compelling.

**A staggering 91% of respondents expressed their support for the expansion of renewable energy resources throughout the islands.** Moreover, the importance of developing Hawai'i's own energy resources was emphasized across all counties by the residents. This resounding endorsement from the community validates the strong support for continued investment and advancement in renewable energy solutions to meet our collective energy goals.

This bill is a forward-looking initiative that prioritizes scientific research and environmental stewardship. By identifying geothermal and carbon sequestration resources, this measure supports Hawai'i's broader goals of achieving energy resilience and combating climate change. Resource characterization through slim-hole bores offers a minimally invasive method for gathering critical data, ensuring that these activities are conducted responsibly and with

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



minimal environmental disruption. This approach reflects a commitment to balancing energy development with environmental protection.

As the State advances resource exploration activities, Ulupono believes robust, early and ongoing community engagement must be a foundational element of this work. This engagement must take place in parallel with any exploration activities, as it is also important to understand the scope and potential resources to have a deeper conversation about what is at stake. Meaningful engagement—particularly with Native Hawaiian communities, cultural practitioners, and residents of nearby areas—is essential to ensuring these efforts are grounded in place-based knowledge, cultural awareness, and community priorities. Proactive outreach that clearly explains the purpose of the exploration, listens to concerns, and incorporates local perspectives helps build trust and increases the likelihood that any resulting resource development delivers real, lasting benefits to the people of Hawai‘i rather than unintended impacts. Our support is contingent upon ensuring that exploration efforts stay aligned with community priorities as well as Hawai‘i’s broader renewable energy and sustainability goals for the long-term benefit of its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Vice President, Government Affairs



# Sustainable Energy Hawai'i

sustainableenergyhawaii.org  
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March 2, 2026

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Honorable Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee,

## **SB3081 SD1 – SUPPORT**

Sustainable Energy Hawaii supports SB3081 SD1, which establishes the Underground Energy Resource Characterization Program within the Hawaii State Energy Office in collaboration with the University of Hawaii's Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center. This measure directly advances Hawaii's progress toward the 100% renewable portfolio standard by 2045 and aligns with Governor Green's Executive Order 25-01 calling for accelerated renewable energy deployment.

### **Why Resource Characterization Matters Now**

Hawaii's 100% RPS target requires firm, dispatchable renewable generation to complement variable solar and wind resources. Geothermal is the only in-state, scalable, firm renewable option currently available. The existing 38 MW Puna Geothermal Venture on Hawaii Island demonstrates the viability of this resource, yet the statewide geothermal potential remains insufficiently documented. Without publicly funded resource data, private developers are faced with prohibitive exploration risk, which translates into higher risk premiums in power purchase agreements and, ultimately, higher electricity costs for ratepayers. State-sponsored slim-hole characterization reduces that uncertainty and creates a foundation for private investment.

The slim-hole boring method specified in SB3081 SD1 (seven inches or less in diameter for over 90% of bore depth) represents one of the least invasive approach to subsurface exploration. Slim-hole boring is scientific characterization, not production drilling. The distinction matters both technically and in terms of community impact.

### **Key Strengths of SB3081 SD1**

We note several provisions that reflect lessons learned from decades of geothermal discussions in Hawaii. First, the bill requires environmental assessment or environmental impact statements under Chapter 343, HRS, before any development activity can proceed from the characterization findings. Second, it mandates input from Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, acknowledging the deep cultural significance of geothermal resources. Third, the bill requires annual legislative reporting and a public progress report by 2028, ensuring transparency and accountability. Fourth, the program also characterizes carbon sequestration potential and underground water resources, yielding data with broader applications for agriculture, land use planning, and climate resilience.

## **Community Engagement Is Essential, Not Optional**

Sustainable Energy Hawaii recognizes the legitimate concerns raised by Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and Puna community members who have lived experience with geothermal development since the 1980s.

We urge HSEO and the University of Hawaii to treat community engagement not as a procedural requirement, but as a substantive obligation. Engagement must begin before exploration activities, must meaningfully incorporate place-based and cultural knowledge, and must continue through and beyond project completion. The cultural relationship between Native Hawaiians and subsurface thermal resources is real and must be respected in both process and outcome. We believe SB3081 SD1's provisions for cultural practitioner input and environmental review represent necessary steps, though their effectiveness will depend entirely on implementation.

## **Fiscal Context**

We support funding this program from the Energy Security Special Fund at the level DBEDT and HSEO have recommended (\$6 million for one or two additional slim-hole wells). This is a strategic investment that reduces long-term ratepayer costs by de-risking private sector participation. The bill's own findings appropriately acknowledge current fiscal constraints from federal funding changes, making this a measured, data-driven allocation rather than a speculative expenditure.

## **Recommendation**

Sustainable Energy Hawaii respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB3081 SD1. Geothermal resource characterization is a necessary prerequisite to informed energy planning. Hawaii stakeholders cannot accurately evaluate to what degree geothermal can contribute to the 100% RPS without critical subsurface data. This bill provides the framework for responsible, transparent, and culturally informed exploration.

We ask the Committee to ensure that any amendments preserve the bill's environmental review requirements, cultural practitioner consultation mandate, and public reporting obligations. These provisions are not merely bureaucratic overhead, they are foundational of public trust.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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*Sustainable Energy Hawaii is a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit advancing clean energy policies and renewable energy deployment through public education, policy advocacy, and stakeholder engagement. For more information, visit [sustainableenergyhawaii.org](http://sustainableenergyhawaii.org).*

**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:17:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Keawe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY OPPOSE!! SB3081 SD1

Dana Keawe

Truth for the People

Moku o Keawe

**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:47:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alice Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As I support geothermal resource development and carbon sequestration, the Hawaii Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center (HGGRC) should execute the geothermal resource characterization. Through this University of Hawaii research unit, the State of Hawaii's most prominent earth scientists are researching Hawaii's groundwater resources. HGGRC obtained land access for research from dozens of landowners across the state. For research equipment, HGGRC has access to \$1 million worth of geophysical equipment and a \$3 million drill rig (Notably, Puna Geothermal Venture is the only other geothermal-focused organization in Hawaii that has a suitable drill rig). The State can further benefit from HGGRC and UH's research, expertise, and resources.

**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:00:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in opposition to SB3081.

While I understand the need for Hawaii to become less dependent on fossil fuels and create our own energy, I do not believe geothermal is the way we should be going. Any geothermal project will take massive investment and will likely only amount to 1 or 2 additional facilities in Hawaii. This will require us to generate the electricity in one central location and transmit said energy to communities across the island or state. This will take massive additional investments to create these transmission routes. The issue with transmitting power is, as we've seen with Lahaina, we are great risk to our environment. Unless we plan on trenching thousands of miles of powerlines on the islands that will have geothermal, we'll continue to be at risk to our weather.

Aside from transmission issues, the issue with any centralized technology is that we will dependent on one central power creation. As we've seen in the past with our weather (localized high winds, heavy rains) or even our geology (earthquakes), one large event can bring down the whole system, has been the case. Heavy winds bring down lines or require HECO to emergency shut-off the power, Oahu suffered an island wide power outage with the large earthquake, and heavy rains can cause flooding which cause long power outages affecting large areas.

We need to be doing research into decentralized systems. We should use the money appropriated for "underground energy resources" instead to research decentralized energy production systems, similar those that are in other countries around the world. If communities have their own power supply – say a mid-scale wind or solar generation, then when another communities power supply goes down, their system won't be affected.

Decentralized energy systems will create safety and stability in Hawaii and help improve our reliance on energy importation. We need decentralized systems. Please either amend this measure to reflect decentralized energy systems (instead of underground energy resources – which will never be decentralized), or oppose this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Keoni Shizuma



**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:40:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY OPPOSE

3081 SB RELATING TO A PROGRAM TO CHARACTERIZE THE POTENTIAL OF UNDERGROUND ENERGY RESOURCES STATEWIDE.

**KahuPuna Opposing Testimony Against Hawaii Senate Bill SB3081: "Relating to a Program to Characterize the Potential of Underground Energy Resources Statewide" submitted 02/27/26 12:55pm**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jasmine Steiner, a lifelong resident of Puna, Hawaii, born and raised since 1988 next to the state's only geothermal plant, Puna Geothermal Venture (PGV). I run KahuPuna, an educational initiative dedicated to exposing the harms and cover-ups of geothermal development in Hawaii, protecting our lower Puna community, and advocating for the 'āina. And to be quite frank, *I cannot believe we are still here testifying on ammended versions of the same 3081. The tactics being used to silence the people are wild.*)

**I testify in strong opposition to SB3081, which seeks to establish and fund a statewide "Underground Energy Resources Characterization Program" under the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to expand geothermal exploitation across our islands, ignoring decades of documented suffering in Puna at the hands of PGV and similar operations. It fast-tracks invasive drilling during an active—**yet deliberately stalled**—geothermal injunction in the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA), erases generations of Native Hawaiian trauma, and lies to unsuspecting communities about the "potential" of these resources while concealing their irreversible harms to humans and the 'āina.**

For over 40 years, Puna residents have endured illegal, unmonitored geothermal drilling by PGV and the County of Hawaii, leading to human rights violations that I've petitioned the United Nations to address. We've seen toxic releases of hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), mercury, arsenic, benzene, and other pollutants—documented on PGV's own safety sheets—causing respiratory distress, neurological damage, headaches, anxiety, skin rashes, and chronic conditions like asthma and bronchitis. The 2013 Geothermal Public Health Assessment Report confirmed higher rates of these issues in communities near PGV, with no baseline health studies ever conducted to measure full impacts, and recommendations for comprehensive monitoring left unimplemented.

**Cultural desecration of Pele's sacred realm has compounded this with spiritual and emotional "dis-ease," violating Native Hawaiian rights and trust duties.** We've fought through lawsuits, settlements (like the 2016 EPA Clean Air Act violation for H<sub>2</sub>S releases and the DOJ grant fraud case), and community forums like "Truth for the

People," only to face stalling tactics that allow expansion without accountability. ( *Aole geothermal—Puna lives matter!! #CriminalJustice #KahuPuna* )

This bill doesn't "characterize" potential; **it greenlights destruction.** Below, I break down key loopholes in SB3081, connecting each to legal issues, potential liabilities, and how it undermines the stalled PGV Repower Project injunction (filed pro se by my mother Sara Steiner and includes over a dozen community members including myself, and 2 volcano scientists, challenging a fraudulent Final Environmental Impact Statement accepted January 22, 2024, now delayed in the ICA to enable fast-tracking):

### **1. Loophole: Vague "Characterization" Program Without Mandatory Environmental or Health Impact Assessments:**

**Bill Breakdown:** SB3081 establishes a program to drill "slim" exploratory boreholes (up to 7 inches in diameter – NOT SLIM AT ALL.) statewide for resource mapping, appropriating unspecified funds to DLNR without requiring a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under Hawaii Environmental Policy Act (HEPA, Chapter 343, HRS) or health risk evaluations. It frames this as non-commercial "data collection," exempting it from rigorous review.

**Connection to Legal Issues and Liability:** This bypasses HEPA's trigger for "actions" involving state lands or funds, similar to how PGV's permit renewals were ruled non-actions in court (e.g., the 2025 ICA ruling in Puna Pono Alliance v. PGV, vacating summary judgment but highlighting evasion tactics). By labeling drilling as "characterization," the state avoids contested case hearings and public input, violating due process under Article I, Section 5 of the Hawaii Constitution. **Legally, this mirrors the fraudulent EIS in the stalled injunction, where PGV downplayed risks like blowouts and seismicity—now, statewide drilling could trigger earthquakes in active volcanic zones, amplifying Kilauea's hazards. Liability-wise, without assessments, the state assumes responsibility for harms (e.g., aquifer pollution or H<sub>2</sub>S releases), opening DLNR to negligence suits under the State Tort Liability Act (Chapter 662, HRS).** Past PGV settlements (e.g., \$76,500 EPA penalty in 2016 for safety failures) show operators dodge accountability, shifting costs to taxpayers—here, no baseline studies mean irreversible damages like contaminated groundwater go unproven, but communities could sue for inverse condemnation if 'āina is desecrated (which it will be. Fracking and drilling our Madame Pele is sacreligious).

**Tie to Injunction and Suffering:** The ICA stall allows this bill to proceed unchecked, erasing Puna's 50+ years of lies (e.g., 1991 blowout exposing 200,000

lbs/hour of toxic steam). Activists like Robert Petricci (44 years fighting) , Sara Steiner, Emily Naole (former native hawaiian councilwoman) and so many more have testified on unaddressed health impacts from the 2013 report—higher neurological harms without monitoring (& still no monitoring today, 2026, 13 years later). Fast-tracking ignores this, perpetuating violations while PGV expands to 46 MW.

## **2. Loophole: Mislabeling of "Slim" Boreholes as Low-Impact, Allowing Invasive Drilling Statewide:**

**Bill Breakdown:** As i stated in my oral testimony to SB3081 , The bill authorizes 7-inch boreholes, falsely called "slim" to minimize perceived risks, without depth limits or site-specific protections. Industry standards define true slim holes as under 6 inches (often 2.5–4 inches, like Hawaii's Scientific Observation Hole program), **but 7 inches enable larger-scale intrusion, potentially for lithium extraction from brines.**

**Connection to Legal Issues and Liability:** This misclassification evades stricter regulations under Underground Injection Control (UIC) permits (40 CFR Part 144), risking brine migration and heavy metal leaks (lead, arsenic) into aquifers—documented in PGV's history and global cases (e.g., 2016 China lithium mine contamination killing fish). Legally, it breaches public trust doctrine (**Article XI, Section 1, Hawaii Constitution**), as DLNR must protect water resources; drilling on sacred sites (e.g., Mauna Kea, Humu'ula) desecrates Native Hawaiian cultural landscapes, violating Act 50 (cultural impact assessments) and leading to suits like Nelson III and Steiner v. DHHL (challenging expansions on Hawaiian Home Lands).

**Liability EXPLODES:** State could **(AND WILL)** face class actions for irreversible 'āina harm (e.g., ecosystem desertification from water scarcity, as in Andes lithium sites), with no insurance clauses in the bill shifting billions in cleanup to taxpayers. PGV's 70+ upset conditions (1991–2013) show unmonitored peaks (up to 789 ppb H<sub>2</sub>S) cause acute exposures—here, statewide drilling multiplies this without emergency protocols.

**Tie to Injunction and Suffering:** The stalled injunction highlights PGV's fraudulent EIS ignoring these risks; SB3081 extends this statewide, (are they really this criminal in the fake state of Hawaii?) dismissing Puna's generational trauma (e.g., 1990s tort cases settling ~\$2M for health damages). Kanaka Rocky Kalani's

**expertise on toxins underscores unprotected children—bill's fast-track ignores this, lying to Hawaiians about "clean" energy.**

### **3. Loophole: Lack of Community Consultation and Cultural Protections, Prioritizing Expansion Over Rights:**

**Bill Breakdown:** No provisions for meaningful Native Hawaiian or community input, royalties for affected areas, or moratoriums until health studies are done. It empowers DLNR to select sites without tribal consultation, tying into broader agendas like HB1307/SB1269 for 50–100 MW expansion.

**Connection to Legal Issues and Liability:** Violates federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and state laws (Chapter 6E, HRS) on historic preservation; **Mike Kaleikini's dual PGV/DHHL roles (under ethics probe) exemplify conflicts, as in lawsuits challenging expansions on sacred Pele-honua.** **Legally, this fast-track during the ICA stall contravenes the injunction's demand for trial on cultural desecration—potentially voiding the bill if the court rules.**

**Liability:** Without consultation, state liable for emotional distress claims (e.g., PTSD from noise/vibrations, as in Puna testimonies), with precedents like Blue Ocean v. Watkins (1991 injunction halting federal geothermal). Unenforceable benefits (e.g., no community fees) mean locals bear risks like waste streams (hazardous solids) without gain, inviting fiduciary breach suits against DLNR.

**Tie to Injunction and Suffering:** Puna's fight (e.g., #AolePGV, Pa'akai Communications' flawed outreach) shows ignored voices; the stall lets SB3081 erase this, perpetuating 1950s-era exploitation (Kapoho wells piercing Pele). Women's groups report allergies and stress—bill's loophole amplifies irreversible cultural erasure.

### **4. Loophole: Unlimited Appropriations and No Accountability for Failures or Upsets:**

**Bill Breakdown:** **Appropriates funds without caps, audits, or penalties for violations, allowing indefinite drilling without performance metrics or sunset clauses.** (what?? what the heck?)

**Connection to Legal Issues and Liability:** Breaches fiscal responsibility under Article VII, Section 5 (balanced budget); no oversight mirrors PGV's grant fraud (2016 \$5.5M DOJ settlement). Legally, exposes state to ultra vires claims if funds enable unpermitted actions.

**Liability:** Taxpayers foot blowout cleanups (e.g., 1991 PGV incident), with no waivers—could lead to sovereign immunity waivers under Chapter 662 for negligence. Global "fraccidents" (200+ U.S. spills) show risks; here, no independent monitoring means hidden harms, inviting perpetual litigation.

**Tie to Injunction and Suffering:** Injunction stalls to fund this; ignores Puna's 400+ complaints (noise, smells) and unimplemented 2013 recommendations, lying about safety while generations suffer.

In conclusion, SB3081 is a dangerous fast-track that ignores Puna's scars, desecrates the 'āina, and burdens future generations with irreversible harms. Reject it outright. Demand justice: Enforce the injunction, implement health studies, and prioritize solar over geothermal. Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Jasmine Steiner  
#WeArePuna  
KahuPuna Founder  
Puna, Hawaii



**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:52:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald "Ron" Reilly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members Ways and Means Committee,

I am in strong support of SB3081 SD1

Hawaii's 100% RPS target requires firm, dispatchable renewable generation to complement variable solar and wind resources.

Geothermal is the only firm renewable, clean energy option currently available.

State-sponsored slim-hole characterization of geothermal resources reduces uncertainty and creates a foundation for necessary private investment.

The UH's Hawaii Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center has the experience and skills to carry out this research and the information gained will be shared publicly via a central public knowledge repository.

A sustainable future requires an urgent transition to clean, healthy, and affordable energy for all.

I respectfully urge your support for SB3081 SD1.

Ron Reilly, Volcano  
Advocate for climate solutions

**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:07:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and members of the WAM committee:

I'm testifying in strong support of SB3081. We need to reduce our energy costs, and one way to do this is to explore our State resources. This bill would help us better understand our geothermal resources.

Please pass this bill out of your committee.

Mahalo nui,

Paul Bernstein

Honolulu

**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:21:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ruth Robison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Ruth Robison

I have been a resident of Hawai`i since 1962 and of Hilo since 1982.

This testimony is in strong support of SB3081 SD1 RELATING TO A PROGRAM TO CHARACTERIZE THE POTENTIAL OF UNDERGROUND ENERGY RESOURCES STATEWIDE.

I have lived in Hilo since 1982. The only geothermal power plant in the state, as you know, is on our island. Some people who have lived near the plant have complained about the odor and perceived health effects of emissions from the plant. This is basically a problem due to building it too close to a residential area. One of the things that SB3081 SD1 will do is to find locations that can be productive, give financial benefit to Native Hawaiians, and be far enough away from residences to avoid problems of the past. Hawai`i should remedy the fact that it is the only state without a geological survey.

We have seen how Aotearoa/New Zealand has been able to take advantage of its geothermal resource to become more energy independent and Hawai`i should be doing that, too. SB3081 SD1 preserves cultural and environmental protections (section 3 (d)). It explicitly requires the protection of cultural sites and burials, as well as Native Hawaiian traditional practices.

SB3081 SD1 is essential for Hawaii's energy independence and water security. It removes barriers to scientific research and protects environmental and cultural resources. It ensures public access to critical subsurface data. It enables evidence-based decisions about our energy and water.

I urge the Committee to PASS SB3081 SD1.

Thank you for your service to the people of Hawai`i.

**SB-3081-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:51:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noel Morin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3081 SD1**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noel Morin. I support SB3081 SD1.

Hawaii's path to 100% renewable energy by 2045 requires firm power, not just solar, wind, and storage. Geothermal is the only in-state resource that can deliver clean firm power. However, our statewide resource is largely uncharacterized. Without publicly funded resource data, developers face prohibitive exploration risk.

SB3081 SD1 will fund slim-hole characterization wells, an important step in understanding our geothermal resource, de-risking exploration, and managing the ratepayer impact.

Please support SB3081 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

[Noel Morin](#)

Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience Advocate Hilo, Hawai'i