HB 595
RELATING TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Public Hearing, February 8, 1999
8:30 a.m., Room 312, State Capitol

By
John Harrison, Environmental Center
Jacquelin Miller, Environmental Center

HB 595 would amend chapters 183C and 183C-1, HRS, to strengthen protections of scenic resources in the conservation district and to provide guidelines for BLNR consideration of proposed High voltage power lines in the conservation district.

Our comments on this measure are compiled from voluntarily submitted opinions of the listed academic sources, and as such, do not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Public sentiment concerning unsightly overhead utility installations increasingly mandates that a measure such as this becomes institutionalized as State policy. Opinions of university faculty and staff elicited during our review of the draft EIS for the proposed Kamoku-Pukele 138kV transmission line were overwhelmingly in favor of an alternative to the utility's preferred overhead alignment along a prominent ridgeline. Principal concerns included aesthetics, safety, hurricane vulnerability, and questions as to the need for the project.

We strongly concur with the intent to deny automatic approval of applications in the event that a board decision is not reached in 180 days. As the complexity of the issues involved in the Kamoku-Pukele line illustrate, findings of fact and decision making may be impossible in that time frame, particularly when legitimate competing interests are so divergent.