S.C.R. 80
S.R.35
REQUESTING A STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE TO BE KNOWN AS AINA-911

Senate Committee on Labor and Environment

Public Hearing - March 18, 1999
1:30 p.m., Room 225, State Capitol

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S.C.R. 80 / S.R. 35 resolves to convene a meeting of government and NGO representatives to consider the feasibility and possible model structures of a citizens' informational network on environmental issues to be called, "Aina-911".

Increasingly, environmental management emphasizes community action and involvement. The proposed hot line and web page/e-mail reporting method would be a flagship example of the State's efforts to improve community participation in environmental protection.

By promoting and encouraging stewardship of environmental resources at the community level, the Aina-911 hotline offers a cost-effective measure of environmental security analogous to the Neighborhood Watch program, which has been instrumental in reducing crime. In addition, this proposal offers a way to simplify government through a process that would identify overlaps, thereby increasing efficiency. Citizen reporting also offers a means of augmenting enforcement efforts relating to local or regional pollution or contamination violations.
A substantial advantage of a system that utilizes an e-mail/webpage format is that people could easily write in their reports of environmental problems or concerns, thereby providing the state with a "hard copy" that could be forwarded to the appropriate office for action. A statewide telephone "hot line", employing an 800 number, also should be provided for those who do not have access to either e-mail or the internet. This hot line could have an answer phone to reduce staff time.

The proposed meeting of government and non-government representatives would be useful to generate ideas and possible structures for the proposed Aina-911 system, but a much smaller group probably may effect the design and implementation process. One feature that should be considered is an interface with existing Geographic Information System (GIS) databases that offer computerized mapping capabilities so that system users can readily locate and appreciate regional and cumulative impacts.