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HB 1815 MAKING AND APPROPRIATION FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DATABASE

Statement for
House Committee on
Energy and Environmental Protection
Public Hearing - February 15, 1991

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HB 1815 would appropriate funds to the Office of Environmental Quality Control to support the incorporation of information from 4000 Environmental Assessments/Negative Declarations into the Hawaii Environmental Impact Statement Bibliographic Database being developed by the Environmental Center of the University of Hawaii.

Since 1975, under HRS 343-5, and the EIS rules 11-200-12, certain actions have been subject to "Environmental Assessment" to determine if the action proposed may have a significant effect on the environment. If it may, then an Environmental Impact Statement preparation notice is filed and an EIS is prepared. If no significant effect is likely to occur, then a "Negative Declaration" is issued. For the vast majority of actions (approximately 90 percent), the Environmental Assessment leads to a Negative Declaration. The information contained in these assessments is not widely disseminated and specific studies that have been undertaken as part of the EA process are not readily available. Thus, it is difficult to make use of the information contained in these EA's for subsequent environmental evaluations. Such information would be of value to state or county planners, agencies, departments, consultants, or the public in connection with either the preparation or review of environmental documents.

Because the Environmental Center of the University of Hawaii is currently developing such a data base for information contained in Environmental Impact Statements, with the support of the Office of Environmental Quality Control, the addition of related information from Environmental Assessments, as is provided by HB 1815, would complete the inventory/database of environmental information gathered in compliance with HRS 343. We appreciate the support of the legislature and OEQC in these projects.