HB 1789
RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN TRANSPORTATION

House Committees on
Transportation
Energy and Environmental Protection

Joint Public Hearing - February 11, 1993
8:30 A.M., Room 1008 SOT

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HB 1789 would amend Section 26-19, HRS to create within the office of the director of transportation an office of environmental oversight to monitor and encourage compliance with state and federal environmental laws and to assist in planning and implementing departmental environmental affairs.

Our statement on this bill does not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

With its broad mandate to establish, maintain, and operate transportation facilities in the state, the department of transportation is daily confronted with environmental management concerns and the need to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. However, although coordination of transportation mandates with environmental policies is essential, the legislative designation of internal DOT management structure seems to approach unwarranted micromanagement. Are other line agencies similarly charged by legislative fiat?

Certainly, we concur with the intent that there should be a strong environmental policy coordination which applies to all agencies. However, we feel that it is the responsibility of the executive branch to both articulate and implement such policy. We have long advocated creation in the governor’s office a governor’s advisory council combining the present functions of the Office of Environmental Quality Control and the Environmental Council. We envision the primary role of such an advisory body to be the oversight and coordination of environmental policy implementation throughout all executive agencies.

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