HB 695
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SYSTEM

House Committees on
Energy and Environmental Protection
Water and Land Use Planning

Joint Public Hearing - February 13, 1993
8:30 A.M., Room 1310 SOT

By
John T. Harrison, Environmental Center
Kern Lowry, Urban and Regional Planning
M. Casey Jarman, Richardson School of Law
Jacquelin N. Miller, Environmental Center
Peter J. Rappa, Sea Grant

HB 695 would amend Chapters 341 and 343, HRS, to provide for amendments to the state EIS system. Major proposed changes include:

1) provision for participation of the OEQC in review of EISs and coordination of agency review participation;

2) definition of "cumulative impact";

3) definition of "preparation notice";

4) inclusion of cumulative impact assessment as a content requirement of EISs;

5) addition of special management areas as defined in section 205A-41 as project locations which trigger Chapter 343, and;

6) addition of areas designated as critical habitat pursuant to the Endangered Species Act as project locations which trigger Chapter 343.

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

During the past legislative session, the substantive changes included in this measure were included in HB 2391, along with provisions for alternative dispute resolution of contested assessment and acceptance determinations. HB 2391 was passed by the legislature, but was vetoed by the governor.

HB 695 explicitly has deleted those items which were specifically identified by the governor as objectionable in his veto message. Thus, what is proposed should be acceptable, both to the legislature and to the administration. Furthermore, each of these provisions was a recommendation contained in the Environmental Center's 1992 report on the state EIS system, and thereby represents the consensus of the broad cross section of government, business, and advocacy group participants in the Center's survey. As a consequence, we strongly support the present form of HB 695 as a product of a long term, comprehensive effort to identify and implement needed amendments to the state's EIS system.