SCR 147
REQUESTING A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON HAWAII’S ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW SYSTEM

Senate Committee on Government Operations, Environmental
Public Hearing - April 6, 1993
1:00 P.M., Room 405 SOT

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

We are rather perplexed by the introduction of this resolution, in view of the fact that the Environmental Center last year completed a comprehensive review of the State’s EIS system which specifically addresses most of the issues raised for study. Certainly, on that basis alone, it would seem unwise to proceed with an additional study, particularly since most of the recommendations developed by the Center’s report have yet to be implemented.

We also take extreme issue with a number of the premises posed by this resolution. In some instances, the information is flatly wrong, as in the presumed establishment of the EIS system in 1979 instead of 1974 when Act 246 originally created the system. In other cases, issues are raised which are not considered issues by those who work with the system. An EIS is a disclosure of information. Decisionmaking is based on permits, and while there may be confusion as to the distinction between a permit and an EIS, that confusion cannot be supported by a simple reading of Chapter 343 or the EIS Rules, which explicitly define an EIS as a disclosure document.

While additional study is usually a welcome activity, in this case, we suggest that the requested study is not sufficiently justified by the premises of the resolution and by the circumstances of information already available for review.

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