



**THE PELE DEFENSE FUND**

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We are disappointed in Secretary of Energy, James Watkins, for holding an invitation-only public hearing which excludes testimony expressing perspectives of the native Hawaiian host culture. In effect, this is a closed door opportunity for the state to court the federal government into funding the most dangerous and expensive source of energy in Hawai'i. At a cost of \$4 billion to develop, only the federal government or foreign investors such as from Japan, could afford to provide the capital for geothermal energy to be used to generate electricity.

We are certain that geothermal energy will prove to be an exorbitant, dangerous, toxic and unstable source of electricity. Moreover, it places an unreasonable and intolerable burden upon native Hawaiians by assaulting the last living deity, Pele and threatening thereby to eliminate the practices, beliefs and customs to her and her family. It diminishes our sovereign land base that is tied up under the ceded public lands trust and now administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources. It will destroy the rainforest that we depend upon as a source of medicine in our traditional healing practices and as a source of native plants gathered by halau for weaving lei and making ceremonial adornment. It will

restrict access into the forest for gathering, hunting and traditional ceremonies.

In light of the highly controversial nature of geothermal energy, the federal government should not commit any more money for its research and development until all points of view have been presented. The federal government should also examine the extensive studies and court findings which document the negative impact of geothermal energy upon the rainforest, the environment, the general public and native Hawaiians. Governor Waihee and Senator Inouye, as our public officials should advocate for such an approach.

We feel that a thorough review of the impact of geothermal energy will show that not another penny of public tax monies should be spent for its development. Federal tax monies should be spent on other sources of renewable energy in Hawai'i which do not put the general public and native Hawaiians at risk, such as solar energy, wind power and OTEC. Moreover, monies should be spent on energy conservation measures which could save 500 megawatts of electricity, the amount to be generated by the geothermal plants on the Big Island for O'ahu, at a fraction of the cost.

We call upon Secretary of Energy James Watkins to take an interest in the culture, health and welfare of Hawai'i's people before taking any action in support of geothermal energy development.