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United States Senate

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WASHINGTON D. C.
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April 13, 1988

Ms. Davianna McGregor
1942 Naio Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Dear Ms. McGregor:

Thank you for your recent correspondence expressing opposition to geothermal drilling and your support of the Native Hawaiian religion. I am pleased by your concern for the welfare of Hawaii and the Native Hawaiian people. I share these concerns.

I have long supported the development of geothermal energy in Hawaii because it offers a safe, available and economic alternative source of energy. Scientific environmental impact studies have shown that geothermal sources of energy can be tapped without environmental harm to the Island of Hawaii.

Hawaii is almost totally dependent on imported oil to meet our energy needs. The Hawaiian Islands, of course, have no fossil fuels such as petroleum, coal or natural gas as natural resources. Therefore, our reliance on imported fuel renders Hawaii vulnerable to shortages due to war, weather disasters or shipping stoppages. In addition, we are at the economic mercy of world market prices -- when prices soar, as history demonstrates is inevitable, all prices in Hawaii soar because we have no locally produced source of energy to offset high prices. It should be noted that Hawaii depends on petroleum to generate more than 90 percent of our electrical needs, compared to the national average of 4 percent.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the exploitation and current heavy use of fossil fuels result in environmental problems in Hawaii and the rest of the world -- air and water pollution, acid rain, and sludge waste run-off, to name a few. Nuclear power is available, but not feasible in Hawaii because our energy needs are too small to subsidize the cost of a nuclear power plant.

As you may be aware, other areas of the United States are far ahead of Hawaii in development of geothermal power plants. Such plants in northern California produce over

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1,400 megawatts, while residents of Klamath Falls, Oregon, and Boise, Idaho, have been using geothermal hot water to heat their homes for the past century.

The development of geothermal sites in Hawaii must meet all State and federal laws mandating the protection of the environment and wildlife. Federal laws govern the utilization of sites within national parks and wildlife refuges. The Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources requires a process of permit applications and approval for other sites.

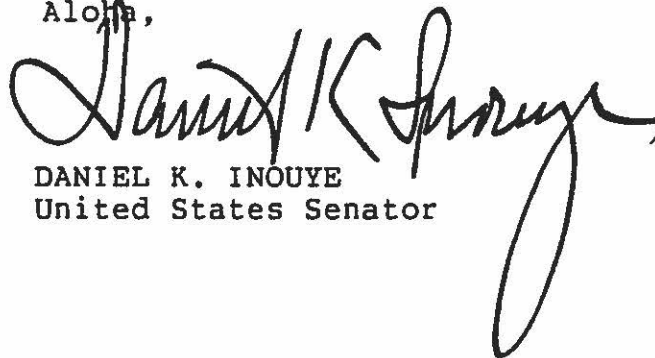
In regard to your concern for Native Hawaiian religion, you may be interested to know that I was the author of legislation enacted in 1978 that includes the Native Hawaiian religion under the Native American Religious Freedom Act, which requires the federal government to protect the religious rights of native Americans.

The Hawaii State Supreme Court has recently ruled that the exploration and development of geothermal energy does not infringe on the Native Hawaiian religious worship of the goddess Pele. I am aware that this ruling has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I fully recognize and support the practice of the Native Hawaiian religion, but it has not been shown that the tapping of geothermal energy in Hawaii poses any threat to religious rights, nor violates any other government laws.

You may be assured that we share a mutual love of Hawaii -- it is my place of birth, upbringing and residence. I appreciate hearing your views on this issue, and I hope that you will continue to keep in touch with me in the future.

Aloha,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel K. Inouye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

DANIEL K. INOUE
United States Senator

DKI/pmr