



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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HB 1548  
RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

Statement for  
House Committee on  
Energy and Environmental Protection  
Public Hearing - February 15, 1991

By  
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HB 1548 would increase the opportunity for public awareness of actions being assessed under HRS 343 by requiring that environmental assessments be made available for public review and comment through the Office of environmental Quality Control. A 30 day period for review of the EA would begin on the date the availability of the assessment is published in the Bulletin. The agency would accept written comments on the assessment during the 30-day review period. An Environmental Impact Statement would be required if the agency finds, based on the review and comments received, that the proposed action may have a significant effect on the environment. The bill would also amend HRS 343-6 (3) and 343-7 to add to the rule making directions to the council, language required to implement the proposed changes and modifications to the time limits for judicial appeal of negative determinations.

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

HB 1548 closely follows House Bill 2217 introduced last year and on which the Environmental Center submitted a lengthy statement. We strongly support the intent and purpose of HB 1548 and believe that it would significantly reduce conflicts relevant to negative determinations, lessen costs attributable to unforeseen impacts, and reduce time lost in project delays due to inadequate assessments and the resulting initiation of legal action.

After all these positive accolades in support of the intent of HB 1548, we must counter with a suggestion that the bill be deferred for this session. As you may know, the Environmental Center, with funds provided by the Legislature and under contract with OEQC, is preparing a complete review and evaluation of HRS 343. This study has included interviews with 42 agencies and organizations composed of 81 individuals that work directly with the EIS system. While the substance of HB 1548 is in general agreement with some of the recommendations being developed from these interviews, we believe that piecemeal changes to HRS 343 are not desirable at this time. The topic of HB 1548 is being addressed, we will be submitting the results of our evaluation of HRS 343 soon, and we urge that changes to HRS 343 be deferred until the legislature, participating agencies and organizations have had the opportunity to digest the overall findings and recommendations of our report relevant to HRS 343.