



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Environmental Center
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone (808) 948-7361

RL:0861

HB 3299
RELATING TO ENERGY CONSERVATION

Statement for
House Committee on
Planning, Energy and Environmental Protection
Public Hearing - February 8, 1990

By
Jacquelin N. Miller, Environmental Center
Clifford Smith, Botany/Cooperative National Park Resources Studies Unit
Roy Takekawa, Environmental Health and Safety Office

The purpose of this bill is to require the installation of solar energy systems or heat pumps for residential water heating in all new single family homes and multi-unit residential buildings, and to provide a 50 percent tax credit for the installation of these systems.

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

We certainly concur with the intent of this bill and the need to encourage energy savings through a requirement for solar water heaters or heat pumps, and tax credits.

We have repeatedly indicated in our reviews of housing developments proposed for the Ewa plain for example, that solar water heating systems should be required as part of the building permit, especially in that area. The Ewa plain has one of the highest rates of solar insolation recorded on Oahu. Solar heating in some of the wetter, less sunny areas is not feasible hence the provision to require heat pumps as an alternative for heating water is appropriate.

We would add one word of caution. Because solar water heaters or heat pumps would be required and because a large tax credit for either would be granted, there is a potential opportunity for capricious pricing on the installation of either system. Presumably, the market will be competitive and therefore this will assure that purchasers are not being sold systems at greatly inflated prices because of either the requirement for their installation or the tax credit "refund" they will receive on the purchase price.