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SB 143 RELATING TO UTILITY TRANSMISSION LINES

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Public Hearing, February 16, 1999
9:00 a.m., Room 016, State Capitol

by
John T. Harrison, Environmental Center

SB 143 would amend Chapter 269-27.6, HRS, to require that 46kV or greater transmission lines in residential areas, near schools or licensed child care facilities be buried underground.

Our statement on this measure is compiled from voluntarily submitted opinions of the listed reviewers and does not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Public sentiment concerning unsightly overhead utility installations increasingly mandates that a measure such as this becomes institutionalized as State policy. Opinions of university faculty and staff elicited during our review of the draft EIS for the proposed Kamoku-Pukele 138kV transmission line were overwhelmingly in favor of an alternative to the utility's preferred overhead alignment. Principal concerns included aesthetics, safety, hurricane vulnerability, and questions as to the need for the project.

We thus concur with the intent of the present measure, but we would suggest that lines 13-14, page 2, be rewritten as follows:

... underground and designed so as to minimize electro-magnetic field emissions."