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Testimony to the City Council of the City and County of Honolulu
 Wednesday, June 5th, 2013 at 10 a.m.

RE: BILL 11: RELATING TO THE OPERATING BUDGET AND PROGRAM FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2013 TO JUNE 30, 2014.

Aloha Chair Martin, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the City Council,

HSEA is a non-profit trade organization that has been advocating for solar energy since 1977, with an emphasis on residential distributed generation and commercial for both solar hot water (SHW) and photovoltaics (PV). We currently represent 70 companies, and our members include installers, contractors, manufacturers, distributors, the utility, and others. With 35 years of advocacy behind us, HSEA's goal is to work for a sustainable energy future for all of Hawaii.

HSEA **supports** the provisions in Bill 11 which provides funding for an additional six full time electrical inspectors for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013.

DBEDT estimates that the solar industry comprises approximately 26% of Hawaii's entire construction income. Fueled by the highest electric rates in the nation, and the public's desire to take charge of their electric bills and invest in the state's green energy infrastructure, the solar industry has experienced rapid growth in these last few years. The number of permits issued for PV projects on Oahu increased from 698 permits in 2009 to 12,266 permits issued in the first half of 2013. This is good news both for the utility customer and for the state as we work to reduce our dependence upon imported fossil fuels.

However, this rapid increase in the number of permits issued and the subsequent requests for inspections has led to lengthy delays for home owners and businesses that wish to complete the process and begin to generate their own electricity. Many have reported waits of three or more months to get an inspection, and these waits delay both the activation of net energy metering agreements, and the collection of lease payments as the systems must be operable before payment begins.

In addition, although the number of installations has increased rapidly in the past four years, Hawaii is still a long ways from reaching its clean energy goals. Currently, NEM systems account for around 2% of Hawaii's overall generating capacity, which shows that Hawaii's PV installations have only just begun. HSEA is therefore very supportive of the proposal to hire six additional electrical inspectors to help ensure that inspections will be completed in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
 Leslie Cole-Brooks
 Executive Director
 Hawaii Solar Energy Association

MISC. COM. 1197

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Council