

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Thursday, February 2, 2012 at 3:30 p.m.
Conference Room 224, State Capitol**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2281 RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENTS**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii strongly supports S.B. No. 2281, as it proposes to authorize an agency or an applicant to bypass the preparation of an environmental assessment and proceed directly with an environmental impact statement for proposed actions that are determined to require an environmental impact statement.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the “Voice of Business” in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state’s economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The proposed bill will removed a certain amount of redundancy in the Chapter 343 HRS Environmental Review process. While the proposed amendment will eliminate one opportunity for public comment, the public is afforded opportunities to comment on the document during the EIS preparation. In addition, the proposed process will reduce the cost and time for processing documents as it will eliminate the need for an EA when an EIS is going to be required.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.