



New Public Testimony

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To DBEDT LUC <dbedt.luc.web@hawaii.gov>

Name

Gordon Talbo

Email

GTALBO@HAWAII.EDU

ZIP / Postal Code

96766

Representing

Kauai Community College

Agenda Item

Docket No. SP26-416 Kaawanui Solar, LLC

Position

Support

Attachment (if any)

- [KCC-Support-of-AES-Project-to-the-Land-Use-Commission.pdf](#)



Kaawanui Solar Project SP26-416

To: State Land Use Commission

On behalf of the Kaua'i Community College Applied Workforce Technology Division, I am pleased to submit this written testimony in strong support of the Kaawanui Solar Project.

As Kaua'i—along with the State of Hawai'i and the nation—continues to pursue a more sustainable future powered by renewable energy, AES Hawai'i has emerged as a national leader in advancing innovative energy solutions. Their efforts are helping position Kaua'i at the forefront of emerging renewable energy technologies.

The Kaawanui Solar Project will deliver meaningful economic benefits to our local community. It will create valuable employment opportunities for our students as they transition into the workforce, as well as for the broader island workforce. These opportunities will span the construction phase and extend into the long-term maintenance and operation of the project.

The numerous benefits of this project include, but are not limited to, the following:

Kaawanui Solar Project Benefits

- **Significant Environmental Impact**
Prevents the consumption of more than **179 million gallons of fuel** over its 25-year lifespan and avoids approximately **2.35 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions**.
- **Affordable, Stable Energy Pricing**
Delivers power at a **low, fixed, and stable price** over 25 years—cheaper than current fossil fuel alternatives.
- **Enhanced Grid Reliability**
Improves grid stability by:
 - Constructing a new **Kaawanui Substation** for West Kaua'i
 - Deploying stored solar energy through a **Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)** whenever needed
- **Substantial Renewable Energy Contribution**
Generates about **17.5% of Kaua'i's total energy needs**, powering the equivalent of **16,000+ homes annually** with clean, locally produced energy.

- **Economic and Workforce Development**
Supports the local economy by creating jobs, increasing tax revenue, and boosting demand for local goods and services.
 - Estimated lifetime impact:
 - **1,064 jobs** created or sustained
 - **\$77.9 million** in labor income
 - **\$216.7+ million** in total economic output
- **Temporary Land Use with Restoration Commitment**
The project is designed as a **temporary installation**. After 25 years, all infrastructure will be removed, and the land will be restored to its original or comparable condition.
- **Agricultural Co-Location & Food Security**
Partners with a local Kaua‘i-based farming company to integrate **on-site agricultural production** for commercial sale—supporting both:
 - Kaua‘i’s **100% renewable energy goals**
 - Long-term **food security in West Kaua‘i**

The Kaawanui Solar Project represents a responsible investment in Kaua‘i’s energy independence, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality. For these reasons, Kaua‘i Community College’s Applied Workforce Technology Division fully supports this project and its long-term benefits to our students, workforce, and broader island community.

Sincerely,

Gordon Talbo

Gordon Talbo
Professor, Automotive Technology
Applied Workforce Technology Division Chair
Kauai Community College
3-1901 Kaumualii Hwy.
Lihue, HI. 96766
808-245-8262