



Ed Nakaya

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Testimony in support for the AES Kaawanui Solar Project

I am writing in enthusiastic support of the AES Kaawanui Solar Project. I am a lifelong resident of west Kauai, born and raised in the plantation community of Makaweli. I received my primary education at Waimea High and Elementary School.

I grew up in Pakala Camp, just makai of the proposed Kaawanui Solar Project site. My grandparents lived in Kaawanui Camp 6, mauka of the project. My grandfather and father were employed by Gay & Robinson Plantation. Our family has personal experience with the unique, deep mutual respect and care that characterizes the multigenerational relationship that the Robinson family has with their plantation workforce ohana. In these challenging times for Kauai agribusinesses, this project will help them continue to provide housing and other essential benefits for their workforce ohana and improve the infrastructure and safety of the surrounding community. Importantly, the long-term agricultural use of the land will be preserved.

I am a retiree of KIUC, having worked for 38 years with KIUC and its predecessor Kauai Electric. Throughout my years at KIUC, I engaged in education programs and discussions with groups and individuals from west Kauai about our past, current and future means for providing affordable, sustainable energy for all our needs. The path away from near total reliance on fossil fuels was thematic for all my career. I share in our community's hopes and concerns for our island's energy future in the face of climate change and geopolitical disruptions with fuel supplies.

AES has always been a strong partner in providing STEM education and workforce opportunities for our youth. To have many of our students directly engaged in local application of science fundamentals in creating solutions to our world's most pressing existential issues is a priceless aspect of this project. I believe that this innovative solar project located within sight from the main highway near existing energy utility infrastructure will be an inspiring example of local adaptation and problem-solving for our resilient, forward-thinking community.

Through inclusive, careful collaboration with our stakeholders and community-at-large, our island energy cooperative has fashioned a feasible, sustainable, affordable, and environmentally appropriate energy solution that fits well with our island's resources and heritage. Now, twenty-four years after its formation, Kauai's member-owned cooperative is reaping the economic, environmental, and service reliability benefits of its carefully developed energy resource plan.

I currently live in a quiet residential community just mauka of the AES Lawai solar facility. During construction, noise was minimal and today we experience no visual nor other disruption as it supplies clean, abundant renewable energy to our KIUC grid. It is a good neighbor.

Thank you for the opportunity to add my voice of support for approval of this project.

Respectfully,

Ed Nakaya