



New Public Testimony

From webmaster@hawaii.gov <webmaster@hawaii.gov>

Date Mon 5/11/2026 7:31 AM

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

| |
|--|
| Name |
| Carrice Gardner |
| Email |
| |
| ZIP / Postal Code |
| 96754 |
| Representing |
| Self |
| Agenda Item |
| Docket No. SP26-416 Kaawanui Solar, LLC |
| Position |
| Support |
| Attachment (if any) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">C.Gardner-Supportive-Testimony-for-Kaawanui-Solar-5.13.pdf |
| Testimony |
| Please find attached my letter of support for Kaawanui Solar, Docket SP26-416. |

May 8, 2026

Carrice Gardner

To: The Honorable Members of the State of Hawai'i Land Use Commission

RE: Docket SP26-416 Kaawanu i Solar, LLC

Aloha Chair and Commissioners,

I am writing to offer my strong support for the Kaawanu i Solar project and its contribution to a more sustainable, resilient, and affordable Kaua'i.

Having grown up on Kaua'i, I have seen firsthand how our island has become a leader in the clean energy transition through local decision-making. Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) has demonstrated that we can reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels while improving affordability, reliability, and resilience. Building on this progress, Kaawanu i Solar is expected to provide an additional 17.5% of the island's energy, delivering stable, low-cost power for 25 years while strengthening the grid with battery storage. The project's integration plans to incorporate farming will also support local food production and contribute to Kaua'i's food security.

This project is especially important as we witness increasing climate impacts and contend with rising fuel prices. Our reliance on imported fuel for energy exposes residents and businesses to price volatility, while locally generated solar energy offers price stability, energy independence, and reduced emissions. These benefits directly support healthier, more resilient communities.

As an AES Hawai'i employee, I can attest that community engagement has been central to this project. Our reach has included meetings with community organizations and elected officials, open houses, and a public meeting, with continued opportunities for input. The project has also undergone environmental, cultural, and archaeological review, reflecting a commitment to thoughtful, responsible development. A decommissioning plan is in place to ensure the site is restored at the end of its 25-year life, reinforcing responsible land stewardship.

Kaawanu Solar will also provide economic benefits through local jobs and workforce development. AES Hawai'i prioritizes local hiring, and I am proud to work alongside graduates from Kapa'a High School, Waimea High School, and Kaua'i Community College. We are all proud to be part of a team, working towards a more sustainable future, and it is especially meaningful to know that projects like this create meaningful, well-paying employment opportunities for our residents.

Finally, as a mother, I often think about the future we are building for future generations. Reducing our reliance on imported fossil fuels is a meaningful way to stabilize energy costs, strengthen our resilience, and protect our environment.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to approve the State Special Permit for Kaawanui Solar.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carrice Gardner