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SUBCOMMITTEES:
INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT
INDIAN AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
WATER, WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

February 5, 2025

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Office of Congressional Affairs
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Associate Director Baker,

I write to obtain information critical to understanding the proposed offshore wind project in Hawaii's Kaiwi Channel.

Aukahi Energy, a partnership owned by Progression Energy and EDF Renewables North America, has sought approval to build floating offshore windmills in the Kaiwi Channel. The proposed site would be located 12 miles east of Makapu'u Point off the Island of O'ahu. According to the original plan, the windmills would be fully functioning by 2035.

While the project could help advance the State of Hawaii's clean energy goals, local communities and elected officials have raised various concerns and questions that have not been fully addressed to date. Among other things, they are concerned about how the project will impact the current use of the channel, which includes military operations, commercial fishing, recreational and cultural activities.

For example, each year thousands use the channel for recreational purposes. It is also the home of the Kaiwi Channel Swim, the Moloka'i to O'ahu paddleboard race and the Moloka'i Hoe and Na Wahine O Ke Kai outrigger race. These are some of Hawaii's most prestigious outdoor water sporting events.

The lack of clarity on the national security implications is particularly alarming. The Department of Defense Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse decided to lower the "defense posture" in the Kaiwi Channel to allow Aukahi Energy to bid for this project. This decision was made without public comments and is surprising given that the Department of Defense paused offshore wind development around the Island of O'ahu in 2016, citing national security concerns.

Additionally, it cannot go without noting that this project would alter Hawaii's iconic ocean views. These views are central to the people who live in Hawai'i. It is also important to tourists. Nearly 10 million people flock to Hawai'i annually, making it one of the most desirable travel destinations in the world. With millions coming to see our ocean views, altering these views could negatively impact our tourism sector, the largest driver of the state's economy.

In light of these concerns, unsurprisingly there has been a significant amount of community concerns over this proposed project. In 2024, BOEM representatives attended numerous town hall meetings in both East Honolulu and Waimānalo, and at those meeting BOEM officials heard from individuals staunchly opposed to this project. They strongly believe that too many questions remain unanswered.

President Trump's recent executive order freezing wind projects in federal waters gives us time to understand this project better before it restarts. To that end, I request your response to the following questions by April 15, 2025:

1. How visible would the floating turbines be to individuals on O'ahu and Moloka'i if this project were approved? Please share any images or renderings of what individuals would see from the shore.
2. Has BOEM consulted with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DNLR), and how is BOEM addressing DNLR's concerns?
3. Did the Department of Defense request any changes to allow the project to move forward, and who approved the defense posture change?

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mallory Meister in my office at mallory.meister@mail.house.gov or 202-225-2726.

With aloha,



Ed Case
Hawai'i-First District