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James

WEATHERFORD

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT 4

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4th, 2012

County Council must address community impact from geothermal, says Puna Candidate James Weatherford.

The Hawai'i County Council is considering legislation to redirect the county's share of geothermal royalty funds back to their original purpose - addressing community impacts from geothermal development.

James Weatherford, candidate for Hawai'i County Council District 4, fully supports this initiative and says Bill 256-12 must be passed.

"This is not about being 'pro' or 'anti' geothermal. This is about responsible government being responsive to community concerns," Weatherford said in a statement released by his campaign today.

"The incumbent from Puna has had a year-and-a-half to address the concerns of the community in the vicinity of the geothermal plant," Weatherford added. "Instead of responding to and addressing his constituents' concerns regarding impacts of geothermal in the community, he has been spending geothermal funds for other purposes. Instead of draining the geothermal royalty fund, I will bring Puna taxpayers' money back to Puna by doing the work required through the budget process to get capital improvement projects for the district."

Bill 256-12, introduced by Council Chair and Mayoral Candidate Dominic Yagong, will provide an opportunity for residents now living within one mile of the Puna Geothermal Venture facility to be relocated, and would prevent those properties from being reinhabited via resale or rental. This will start to create a buffer around PGV, where as now, some residents live right next to the geothermal power plant.

In addition to relocation, Bill 256-12 also promotes public health and safety by providing expenditures on health studies, air quality monitoring and real-time public notification of emissions. Mandated emergency evacuation preparedness is also being considered by the council in a separate measure.

On May 16th, the legislation received a favorable recommendation from the Council's Agriculture, Water, and Energy Sustainability Committee. Scheduled for June 6th is the first of two more votes needed before being sent to the Mayor for signing into law or veto.

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