

SENATORS GABBARD AND BAKER TO CONVENE INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING ON ISLAND-WIDE POWER OUTAGE

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

State Senator Mike Gabbard (West Oahu), chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment, today announced that his committee, in conjunction with the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection chaired by Senator Roz Baker (West Maui), will convene an informational briefing on January 14, 2009 at 2:00pm in Conference Room 229 at the State Capitol.



The purpose of the briefing is to investigate the causes of the power outage on December 26 that left the entire island of Oahu without power. The briefing will also focus on the reasons for the delay in restoring the power and possible solutions. In addition, the status of electrical systems on the neighbor islands will be explored.

Gabbard said, "I want to make it clear that this is not about pointing fingers and playing the blame game. The business community and residents deserve some answers. These outages do far more than simply leave our residents sitting at home in the dark. They have serious negative effects on businesses and our economy which is having a tough enough time as it is. I've been getting calls from small businesses that lost tens of thousands of dollars in damaged merchandise, in addition to lost business because they couldn't stay open without electricity. We also need to find out what steps need to be taken to develop a more stable and reliable electrical grid."

Baker said, "Reliable electric power is important for our residents and businesses. Through this briefing, we want to ascertain from a regulatory and policy perspective what needs to be put in place to ensure redundancy to improve current reliability as we move forward to new energy platforms."

The briefing's main presentation will be by officials of Hawaiian Electric Industries. Other briefings may be provided by the State Public Utilities Commission and the State Division of Consumer Advocacy. A question-and-answer period will follow the presentation. The public is welcome to ask questions pertaining to island-wide power outages and preparedness.

For more details on the informational briefing, please call Senator Gabbard's office at 586-6830.