
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. In December of 2007, the State was struck by a
2 storm that included torrential rains and high winds. Resulting
3 storm damage on the leeward coast of Oahu was substantial with
4 numerous utility poles falling and damaged. In one case, a
5 utility pole snapped and landed on a house. High winds toppled
6 a total of approximately nineteen poles in Nanakuli and
7 approximately eighteen additional poles fell or were damaged in
8 Maili. For at least three days following the initial storm,
9 pockets of residents in Maili and Nanakuli continued to be
10 without electric utility service.

11 As a result of the downed utility poles businesses and
12 schools were closed due to a lack of electric utility service.
13 Nearly one hundred public schools throughout the State were shut
14 down, including nine schools located in leeward Oahu. In
15 addition, Farrington highway, the primary transportation route
16 through the Maili to Nanakuli corridor in leeward Oahu was
17 adversely impacted by the damaged utility poles with repairs



1 taking several days to complete. This occurrence mirrors a
2 March 2006 storm that downed more than a dozen utility poles in
3 the same general area.

4 The purpose of this Act is to

- 5 (1) Require the public utilities commission to conduct a
6 statewide study to focus on one priority region per
7 county and develop a plan, with consultation and input
8 from the utility service providers and community
9 engagement, for the undergrounding of overhead utility
10 lines for health and safety purposes; and
- 11 (2) Provide funding for the study by appropriating funds
12 into the public utilities special fund under section
13 269-33, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

14 SECTION 2. (a) The public utilities commission shall
15 conduct a statewide study to focus on one priority region per
16 county, and develop a plan, with consultation and input from the
17 utility service providers and community engagement, for the
18 undergrounding of overhead utility lines for health and safety
19 purposes.

20 (b) The study shall include but not be limited to:

- 21 (1) The identification and designation of one priority
22 region for each county in the State that the public



1 utilities commission determines is prone to repeated
2 falling or damage of overhead utility lines due to
3 severe weather, or other conditions or occurrences
4 that can be addressed with the undergrounding of
5 overhead utility lines; and

6 (2) For each designated priority region, the public
7 utilities commission, with consultation and input from
8 the appropriate utility service providers and the
9 affected community, shall develop a plan that includes
10 but is not limited to the following:

11 (A) An examination of the existing issues and
12 problems that each priority area faces with
13 respect to overhead utility lines;

14 (B) A cost-benefit analysis of converting overhead
15 utility lines to underground utility lines,
16 including funding options and cost-sharing
17 programs;

18 (C) An examination of alternative options other than
19 the undergrounding of the overhead utility lines
20 and a determination of the appropriateness of
21 each alternative option to address the problems
22 and issues facing the priority area;



1 (D) An implementation plan for the undergrounding of
2 the overhead utility lines in each priority area;
3 and

4 (E) Any other components in which the public
5 utilities commission deems pertinent to complete
6 a comprehensive study.

7 (c) The public utilities commission shall submit a written
8 interim report to the legislature no later than twenty days
9 prior to the 2009 regular session, and shall submit a final
10 written report of its findings and recommendations, including
11 any proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the
12 2010 regular session.

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the public
14 utilities special fund under section 269-33, Hawaii Revised
15 Statutes, the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be
16 necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the public utilities
17 commission to conduct a statewide study to focus on one priority
18 region per county and develop a plan, with consultation and
19 input from the utility service providers and community
20 engagement, for the undergrounding of overhead utility lines for
21 health and safety purposes.



1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the public
2 utilities commission for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.



Report Title:

Undergrounding; Public Utilities Commission; Study; Funding

Description:

Requires the public utilities commission to study one priority region for each county statewide to develop with input from the utilities a plan for the undergrounding of overhead utility lines for health and safety purposes. Funds for the study shall be appropriated out of the public utilities special fund. (SD1)

