

**Testimony before the House Committee on  
Consumer Protection Commerce**

By Steve Yoshida  
Manager, Construction and Maintenance Department  
**Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.**

March 24, 2008  
**HCR 256 / HR 217**

Chair Herkes, Vice Chair McKelvey and members of the Committee:

My name is Steve Yoshida and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Electric Company and its subsidiaries, Hawaii Electric Light Company and Maui Electric Company. We appreciate the intent of HR 217 which requests the establishment of procedures for the timely replacement of damaged or unsightly utility poles and would like to offer the following comments to share what is currently in place that addresses concerns raised in this resolution.

There currently exists a Joint Pole Agreement between HECO and its subsidiaries, Hawaiian Telcom, the City & County of Honolulu, and the State. The Joint Pole Agreement sets forth specific processes with which the joint pole owners must comply including the installation, maintenance and replacement of poles. For the majority of the wood poles in public rights of ways, HECO or its neighbor island utility subsidiaries is a joint owner with Hawaiian Telcom. In many instances, the City, County or State is also a joint pole owner by way of their street lighting and traffic control equipment attached to the pole. There are currently over 70,000 poles on Oahu which need to be maintained. In order to properly manage this magnitude of poles, maintenance is done on a cycle basis with routine inspections. Poles needing remediation or replacement are prioritized based on factors such as safety, pole condition, number of customers, impact to traffic, critical customers (hospitals, military, etc), among others.

Problematic wooden utility poles are inspected and determinations are made as to whether an emergency condition exists. If deemed an emergency, a crew is dispatched to make the pole safe by installing temporary bracing or immediate replacement. In some cases, the permanent fix requires engineering evaluation and may require additional lead-time based on the options reviewed. For example, certain options may warrant community involvement in deciding upon a type of pole that meets both technical needs and community needs, and once a selection is made, additional time for design, permitting, manufacture, delivery, and installation may span several months. Due to the lead-times involved with performing this work, a 90-day time limit for pole replacement is not realistic to apply to all situations.

In summary, HECO, Hawaiian Telcom and the other Joint Pole owners currently have a process by which remediation of wood poles is prioritized and respectfully ask that this resolution be held in your committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HCR 256/HR 217  
URGING HAWAII UTILITY COMPANIES THAT PROVIDE UTILITY SERVICES TO  
ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A PROCEDURE FOR THE TIMELY REPLACEMENT  
OF DAMAGED OR UNSIGHTLY UTILITY POLES.**

**KEN HIRAKI  
DIRECTOR – GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS  
HAWAIIAN TELCOM**

**MARCH 24, 2008**

Chair Herkes, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee:

I am Ken Hiraki, testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Telcom on HCR 256/HR 217. Hawaiian Telcom respectfully opposes this measure.

HCR 256/HR 217 urges utility companies in Hawaii to establish and implement a procedure for timely replacement of damaged or unsightly poles. As there currently exists a Joint Pole Agreement--which sets forth a specific pole replacement process between our company, Hawaiian Electric (and its subsidiaries), the City & County of Honolulu, and the State, an implementation of a new plan is not necessary.

Based on the aforementioned, we respectfully request that HCR 256/HR 217 be held in your committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.