



LATE
Testimony

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TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2009

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009
9:15 A.M.

TESTIMONY OF CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF
CONSUMER ADVOCACY, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER
AFFAIRS TO THE HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN MIZUNO, CHAIR, AND
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 0133, S.D. 2 – RELATING TO UTILITIES.

DESCRIPTION:

This measure requires the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) to implement a program to achieve lifeline electricity rates for residential electricity users who are elders with limited income, the handicapped with limited income, and any person with a medical condition who is dependent on a medical device requiring electricity to operate.

POSITION:

The Division of Consumer Advocacy (“Consumer Advocate”) supports the intent of the measure, and offers the following comments for the Committee’s consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Consumer Advocate believes that minimizing the financial impacts on low income and disadvantaged customers who have limited options through use of lifeline rates is vital. The measure, however, is unnecessary as the Consumer Advocate and the HECO Companies are already developing a lifeline electricity rate program for the Commission’s consideration. Pursuant to the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative agreement with the HECO Companies, we will file such program for the Commission’s review by

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the end of April 2009. The Consumer Advocate will also work with Kauai Island Utility Cooperative to determine whether such a program can and should be implemented for Kauai customers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.