

TESTIMONY OF HERMINA MORITA
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

FEBRUARY 22, 2013
9:00 a.m.

MEASURE: S.B. No. 1042, S.D. 1
TITLE: Relating to the Public Utilities Commission

Chair Ige and Members of the Committee:

DESCRIPTION:

This measure amends Section 269-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”), and Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, (“Act 177”) relating to staffing and recruitment by the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”).

POSITION:

The Commission strongly supports this measure, as it is critical to the Commission’s efforts to build its capacity to fulfill its rapidly changing regulatory duties. The Commission offers the following comments for the Committee’s consideration.

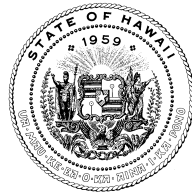
COMMENTS:

This bill would provide the Commission with needed flexibility to recruit and hire staff with the right skill sets to effectively carryout the Commission’s regulatory duties, particularly in the area of energy regulation. While the 2007 Legislature passed Act 177 authorizing the reorganization of the Commission, Act 177 mandates specific position descriptions for Commission staff based on the Commission’s needs during that period, which makes recruitment of personnel to satisfy the Commission’s current regulatory needs very difficult. This bill would support the Commission’s efforts to identify key positions and rewrite position descriptions to build up staffing required to carry out its many current and future duties by eliminating the restrictions of Act 177. The Commission appreciates the amendments made by the Senate Committees on Commerce & Consumer Protection and Judiciary & Labor, which will provide greater flexibility in the Commission’s recruitment and hiring activities.

After being assigned additional space within the Kekuanaoa Building in July 2012, the Commission has continued to work on its office expansion and renovation plan with the assistance of the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Department of Budget and Finance, and the Office of the Attorney General. As the Commission's office expansion plan moves forward, S.B. No. 1042, S.D. 1 will serve to support the Commission in designing and filling the kinds of positions needed to modernize and transform the agency to meet the needs of a rapidly changing regulatory environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on this measure.

LATE



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
LT. GOVERNOR

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**TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**THE TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2013**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2013
9:00 A.M.**

**TESTIMONY OF JEFFREY T. ONO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF
CONSUMER ADVOCACY, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER
AFFAIRS, TO THE HONORABLE DAVID Y. IGE
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES**

SENATE BILL NO. 1042, SD1 - RELATING TO THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

DESCRIPTION:

This measure proposes to insert new position titles within existing statutes describing the civil service status of Public Utilities Commission ("PUC") staff and repeals existing position staff descriptions for the Commission under Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007.

POSITION:

The Division of Consumer Advocacy strongly supports S.B. No. 1042, SD1.

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Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, February 22, 9:00 a.m.
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COMMENTS:

S.B. No. 1042, SD1 allows greater flexibility to the PUC to hire professional staff. The PUC's staff plays an important role in moving and concluding all public utility dockets, including those relating to the State of Hawaii's energy future. Given these circumstances, the Consumer Advocate strongly supports this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.