

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF ELECTRICIANS AND PLUMBERS**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2013

Wednesday, March 27, 2013
4:00 p.m.

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 512, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, RELATING TO
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS.**

TO THE HONORABLE ANGUS L.K. MCKELVEY, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Peter Akamu, Co-Chairperson of the Legislation Committee of the Board of Electricians and Plumbers ("Board"). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 512, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, which amends Section 448E-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS"), to exempt persons employed by a licensed contractor retained by a public utility to perform high voltage electrical work (600 volts or higher) from the licensing requirements of Chapter 448E, HRS.

Initially, the Board was opposed to this bill, as the employment status of the exempt worker and the parties responsible for qualifying the worker for the exemption were not clearly articulated. However, the Board feels these issues have been addressed by House Draft 1; therefore, the Board supports this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 512, S.D. 1, H.D. 1.

Testimony before the House Committee On Consumer Protection & Commerce

**By Leroy J. Chincio
Superintendent, Construction Management Division
Construction and Maintenance Department
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.**

**March 27, 2013
4:00 pm**

**SB 512, SD 1, HD 1
Relating to Electrical Contractors**

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Kawakami, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Leroy Chincio and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Electric Company and its subsidiaries, Hawaii Electric Light Company and Maui Electric Company. We strongly support this bill.

Act 35, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010, had the unintended consequence of preventing out of state electricians from doing work on high-voltage power lines. This bill attempts to remedy this situation. SB 512, SD1, HD 1 seeks to exempt out-of-state electricians hired by a contractor performing high-voltage (600 volts or higher) work for a public utility from licensing laws for electricians.

Currently, other than the employees of the Hawaiian Electric Company, Hawaii Electric Light Company, Maui Electric Company, and Kauai Island Utility Cooperative, there are only a handful of electrical workers in the State that are qualified to perform high voltage work and all of them are currently employed and working. These non-utility, in-state, high voltage workers are qualified to do underground line work; however none are qualified to do overhead line work. Most in-state electrical workers are only experienced in low voltage (120 to 480 volt) work common in most homes and commercial buildings. High voltage work requires very specialized skills, requiring different training, tools, and equipment from the more common low-voltage electrician.

An example of high-voltage work includes the replacement of one hundred and thirty-eight thousand volt poles, hardware, and conductors, located in the mountains which are only accessible by helicopter. To safely and properly perform this work, contractors working for an electric utility may need to use specialized and experienced personnel from the mainland who are not licensed in the state of Hawaii even though they are union members and authorized to work in other states to perform this and other types of high-voltage work.

The exemption is in the state's best interest because it allows contractors to utilize qualified out-of-state high-voltage workers to safely assist the utility in activities such as storm restorations, complex maintenance, and emergency situations, when there is a shortage of local experience.

We appreciate the support of the Legislature in hearing and understanding our concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.