

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

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
INTRASTATE COMMERCE

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
Regular Session of 2018

Wednesday, February 14, 2018  
9:00 a.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1880, H.D. 1, RELATING TO ELECTRICAL  
CONTRACTORS.**

TO THE HONORABLE TAKASHI OHNO, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMITTEE:

My name is Peter Akamu, and I am the Chairperson of the Board of Electricians and Plumbers (“Board”). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1880, H.D. 1. This measure is similar to S.B. 2297 which was passed unamended out of the joint Committees on Transportation and Energy and Labor on February 9, 2018.

H.B. 1880, H.D. 1 extends the sunset date of Act 65, Session Laws of Hawaii (“SLH”) 2013, which provides a limited exemption from the electrician licensing requirements for individuals who are employed by electrical contractors who are retained by a public utility within the State to perform high-voltage (600 volts or higher) electrical work and are deemed qualified by the public utility. The Board discussed this proposal during its December 12, 2017, board meeting.

The current law has been in effect for the past five years, and since the board has not heard of any public safety concerns, it supports the law’s continuation to June 30, 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1880, H.D. 1.



# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

**LOCAL UNION NO. 1186 • Affiliated with AFL-CIO**

1935 HAU STREET, ROOM 401 • HONOLULU, HI 96819-5003

TELEPHONE (808) 847-5341 • FAX (808) 847-2224

February 13, 2018

**TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTRASTATE COMMERCE**

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1880 HD1 RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS**

For Hearing on Wednesday, February 14, 2018, at 9:00 a.m., in Conference Room 429

**Honorable Chair Takashi Ohno, Vice Chair Isaac W. Choy, and Committee Members,**

The **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1186** represents nearly 4,000 members working in electrical construction, telecommunications, and with Oceanic Cable. Our members include civil service employees at Pearl Harbor, Hickam, Kaneohe, and military facilities throughout Hawaii. IBEW Local 1186 also represents over 120 signatory electrical contracting companies that perform most of the electrical work in our state.

IBEW 1186 would like to provide the following **COMMENTS** on **HB1880 HD1**.

Act 65 (2013)'s limited exemption for contractors and its employees was scheduled for repeal on June 30, 2018. Justification at the time, was based largely on a shortage of qualified in-state personnel to perform high voltage work. The five-year exemption has nearly passed and to our knowledge, no factual evidence or data has been presented to indicate the efforts made to strengthen the local labor force needed to perform such high voltage work, yet HB1880 HD1 seeks to extend an exemption that allows out of state workers to compete with Hawaii's local workforce.

Hawaii is facing a growing crisis where the cost of living is increasingly outpacing our local workforce's ability to earn a living wage. A recent study (the ALICE Report) released by Aloha United Way reports that 48% of Hawaii's residents are significantly cost burdened and considered working poor, barely able to make ends meet and some on the verge of becoming working homeless. Situations that once justified the need for a limited exemption as found in Act 65 (2013), can also present great opportunities for our local industries to re-invest in our local workforce, our local families and our local economy. IBEW Local 1186 stands ready to work with our local industries to strengthen its workforce and to provide our local working families with the opportunity to earn a living wage.

Should the extension be granted and before any future extensions be considered, we respectfully request that HB1880 HD1 be amended to require documented and measurable efforts to develop partnerships and/or programs that promote the use of Hawaii's local workforce for high voltage work. Thank you for the opportunity to provide **COMMENTS**.

Mahalo and aloha,

**Damien Kim**

Business Manager – Financial Secretary

International Brotherhood of

Electrical Workers, Local Union 1186



# Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

*The Voice of Business*

**Testimony to the House Committee on Intrastate Commerce  
Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 9:00 A.M.  
Conference Room 429, State Capitol**

**RE: HOUSE BILL 1880 HD1 RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS**

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Choy, and members of the committee:

The Chamber is in **support** of H.B. No. 1880 which proposes to extend the sunset date of the limited exemption from licensing requirements for electrical contractors retained by an electric utility to work with high voltage and who are deemed qualified by the electric utility.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the “Voice of Business” in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state’s economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The bill limits the exemption to electric utility companies, and is a pro-active means to insure the State has access to qualified “high voltage” electricians, splicers, and linemen.

Due to the current lack of electricians, splicers, and linemen in the State who are experienced and qualified to work with high voltage, it may be necessary for an electric utility to contract and retain qualified personnel from other jurisdictions in the United States to perform such high voltage work. Where the electric utility retains such qualified personnel, the electric utility would have direct supervision of such personnel and would have the contractual authority to inspect and approve of all high voltage work prior to acceptance by the electric utility. Further, the operations of the electric utility are regulated and supervised by the public utilities commission. Such regulation and general supervision provides an additional layer of protection for the general public in the event the operations of the electric utility require review.

We understand the exemption has only been used a few times over the last five (5) year period due to the lack of experienced high voltage personnel for specialized work that was being done by the electric utility company.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

# **Testimony before the House Committee on Intrastate Commerce**

**By Paul A. Nakagawa  
Superintendent, T&D Infrastructure  
Construction and Maintenance Department  
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.**

**Wednesday, February 14, 2018  
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 429**

**House Bill 1880 HD1  
Relating to Electrical Contractors**

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Choy, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Nakagawa, and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc. and its subsidiaries, Hawaii Electric Light Company, Inc. and Maui Electric Company, Limited (collectively, the “Hawaiian Electric Companies”) in strong support of HB 1880 HD1.

Act 35, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010, had the unintended consequences of preventing an electric utility in the state of Hawaii from retaining the services of qualified high voltage electrical workers who are otherwise not licensed in the state. HB 1880 HD1 seeks a 5 year extension of the limited exemption provided in Act 65, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013 for out-of-state electricians 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 and majority of them are either already employed or retired. Other than utility electrical workers, most in-state electrical workers are only experienced in low voltage (120 to 480 volts) work common in most residential homes and commercial buildings. High voltage work requires additional skills, training, and experience with related tools and equipment, gained through a specific apprenticeship program. An example of high-voltage work includes the replacement of one hundred and thirty-eight thousand volt (e.g. 138KV) poles, structures, hardware, and electrical wires, located atop our Koolau mountain ridge and only accessible by helicopter or hiking. To safely and properly perform this work, we may need to bring in

specialized out-of-state contractors whose electrical workers are not individually licensed under chapter 448E in the state of Hawaii, but whom are properly qualified and authorized to perform this type of work and other high-voltage work in other states.

This exemption is also in the state's best interest because it allows an electric utility in the state of Hawaii to retain the services of qualified out-of-state high-voltage workers to safely assist the utility in activities such as storm restorations, complex and specialized maintenance, and emergency restorations that potentially impacts the health and safety of the State and its residents when there is a shortage of local experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

# LATE TESTIMONY

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON  
**HOUSE BILL 1880 HD1, RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS**

Before the House Committee on  
**INTRASTATE COMMERCE (IAC)**

by

**MOSES KAOIWI**  
Interim Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA)

Aloha Chair Ohno, Vice-Chair Choy, and the Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) *supports* House Bill 1880 HD1.

HB 1880 HD1 extends the sunset date of Act 65, SLH 2013, which provides a limited exemption to the licensing requirements for certain individuals in situations when an electric utility must retain qualified individuals to work with high voltage (six hundred volts or higher) who are not licensed in the State of Hawaii but are otherwise deemed qualified by the electric utility.

Energy resilience is a critical factor in the preparation for, response to, and recovery from any major disaster striking the state of Hawaii. Responding to energy shortfalls after a major disaster in Hawaii is greatly handicapped by our remote location in the Pacific. Restoring and sustaining energy requirements post disaster is a key to response and recovery. This was the case in our responses to Hurricane Iniki in 1992 and more recently Tropical Storm Iselle in 2014. Once sustained power was finally restored and distributed, the emergency was significantly reduced.

The augmentation provided by out of state resources to our state and county utilities are critical in the restoration of power and return to normalcy after a disaster.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 1880 HD1.

Moses Kaiwi: [Moses.Kaiwi@hawaii.gov](mailto:Moses.Kaiwi@hawaii.gov); 808-733-4300

# POWER CONTRACTING

LATE TESTIMONY

February 14, 2018

TO: REPRESENTATIVE TAKASHI OHNO, CHAIR INTRASTATE COMMERCE  
REPRESENTATIVE ISAAC W. CHOY, VICE-CHAIR INTRASTATE COMMERCE  
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTRASTATE COMMERCE

FROM: BRUCE CONWAY, SR. DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS  
POWER CONTRACTING LLC

RE: HOUSE BILL 1880 HD1 RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS – **STRONG SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Ohno, Vice-Chair Choy and Members of the Committee:

I am Bruce Conway, Sr. Director of Operations for POWER Contracting LLC testifying in strong support of HB1880 HD1 Relating to Electrical Contractors. We are a licensed electrical contractor in Hawaii with C-62 and C-63 licenses under Chapter 444. Our Journeyman Lineman hold Journeyman Lineman cards from the IBEW and have completed extensive apprenticeship training that includes field training, class time, and successfully passing a Journeyman Lineman exam.

We are in strong support HB1880 HD1, and the extension of the repeal date from June 30, 2018 to June 30, 2023 or later. Our industry works on the construction and maintenance of high voltage power lines both overhead and underground with distribution and transmission voltages requiring the specialized skills of Journeyman Lineman, Foreman and General Foreman who are all trained certified Journeyman Lineman. Public utilities like HECO and others contract with local and mainland companies to perform work on high voltage powerlines. Extension of the repeal date continues to enable Hawaii to have access to additional experienced high voltage Journeymen Lineman to provide the necessary capacity to meet the public utilities infrastructure construction and maintenance.

To summarize, HB1880 HD1 extends the repeal contained in section 448E-13 to June 30, 2023. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1880, and we ask that your Committee pass this short term measure to continue providing critical capacity to public utilities throughout the state.