

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

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR  
AND  
TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
Regular Session of 2018

Friday, February 9, 2018  
1:15 p.m.

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 2297, RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS.**

TO THE HONORABLE JILL N. TOKUDA, CHAIR, AND THE HONORABLE LORRAINE R. INOUE, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES:

My name is Peter Akamu, and I am the Chairperson of the Board of Electricians and Plumbers ("Board"). I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2297, which amends Act 65 Session Laws of Hawaii ("SLH") 2013 by extending the repeal date of Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") section 448-E-13 to June 30, 2023. The Board discussed this proposal during its board meeting on December 12, 2017.

For the Committees' information, a similar measure, H.B. 1880, was heard by IAC on January 25, 2018, and the bill passed out with amendments.

HRS section 448E-13 provides that individuals employed by a Hawaii-licensed electrical contractor are exempt from the electrician licensing requirement of chapter 448E, so long as:

- a. The contractor is retained by a public utility within the State under a franchise or charter granted by the State and that it is regulated by the public utilities commission to perform high voltage electrical work for the public utility; and
- b. The respective public utility deems its employee qualified to perform the high voltage electrical work.

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 provide testimony on S.B. 2297.



**Testimony to the Senate Committees on Transportation & Energy and Labor  
Friday, February 9, 2018 at 1:15 P.M.  
Conference Room 225, State Capitol**

**RE: SENATE BILL 2297 RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS**

Chairs Inouye and Tokuda, Vice Chairs Espero and English, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** SB 2297, 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 Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 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 members and the entire business community 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.

We are in strong support of S.B. 2297, and appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony before the Senate Committees on  
Transportation and Energy  
and  
Labor**

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

**Friday, February 9, 2018  
1:15 p.m., Conference Room 225**

**Senate Bill 2297  
Relating to Electrical Contractors**

Chairs Inouye & Tokuda, Vice Chairs Espero & English, and Members of the Committees:

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 SB 2297.

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. SB 2297 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 work 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 who 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.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

**LATE**

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2297  
A BILL RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BY

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

Before the Senate Committees on  
**LABOR**  
And  
**TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY**

Chairs Tokuda and Inouye, Vice-Chairs English and Espero, and the Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) provides the following *in support of* Senate Bill 2297.

SB 2297 extends the sunset date of Act 65, SLH 2013, which provides a limited exemption to the licensing requirements for certain individuals in situations where 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 preparing for, responding to, and recovering 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.

Our ability to augment the capabilities available to our state and county utilities with out-of-state resources is critical to the timely restoration of power and prompt return to normalcy after a disaster.

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB 2297.

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



**SB-2297**

Submitted on: 2/9/2018 10:40:56 AM

Testimony for LBR on 2/9/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Z. Arakawa	Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), appreciates the opportunity to express its **STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2297**, relating to Electrical Contractors, that would extend 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 but are otherwise deemed qualified by the electric utility.

LURF understands that for the past four years, the exemption provided in Act 65 (SLH 2013), has worked well, without any problems, has benefited the public by providing reliable electrical energy service, and has furthered the State's efforts to reach its renewable energy goals. However, Act 65 (SLH 2013) sunsets on June 30, 2018; and the purpose of this bill is to extend the sunset date of Act 65, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013 and allow continued benefits to the residents of the State and progress toward the renewable energy goals of the State.

For the above reasons, LURF is in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2297**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of this measure. Please feel free to contact David Arakawa, LURF Executive Director, if there are any questions.