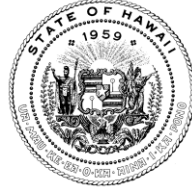


SB 1329

Measure Title:	RELATING TO THE SALARY OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSIONERS.
Report Title:	Public Utilities Commission; Commissioners; Salary Increase
Description:	Aligns the salary of the public utilities commission chair with the highest pay tier of a supervising deputy attorney general. Aligns the salary of the other PUC commissioners with the lowest pay tier of the first deputy attorney general.
Companion:	HB1362
Package:	None
Current Referral:	CPH, WAM
Introducer(s):	BAKER, S. Chang, Fevella, Kidani, Nishihara, Ruderman, Shimabukuro



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: 586-2850
Fax Number: 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
DIRECTOR

JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Monday, February 11, 2019
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 1329, RELATING TO THE SALARY OF THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSIONERS**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

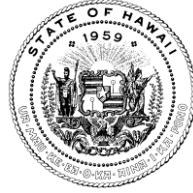
My name is Catherine Awakuni Colón, and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA or Department). The Department supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to align the salary of: (1) the Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) chair with the highest pay tier of a supervising deputy attorney general; and (2) the other PUC commissioners with the lowest pay tier of the first deputy attorney general.

The Commission protects the public interest by overseeing and regulating public utilities to ensure they provide reliable service at reasonable and just rates. In particular, the PUC: regulates all registered public utility companies operating in the State; reviews and approves rates, tariffs, charges, and fees; determines the allowable rate of earnings in establishing rates; issues guidelines concerning the general

management of utility businesses; and acts upon requests for the acquisition, sale, disposition, or other exchange of utility properties. Given the Commission's complex scope of work, it is important that the State raise the salaries of the PUC chair and commissioner to attract and retain the most qualified candidates for these positions. In addition, this measure would help mitigate the significant travel expenses of candidates who are residents of a county other than the City and County of Honolulu. By raising the salaries of the PUC chair and commissioners, the State may be able to attract qualified candidates from neighbor islands and diversify the PUC's representation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310

P.O. BOX 541

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Phone Number: 586-2850

Fax Number: 586-2856

cca.hawaii.gov

CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
DIRECTOR

JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Monday, February 11, 2019
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 1329, RELATING TO THE SALARY OF THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSIONERS**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dean Nishina, and I am the Executive Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Division of Consumer Advocacy (Division). The Division supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to align the salary of: (1) the Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) chair with the highest pay tier of a supervising deputy attorney general; and (2) the other PUC commissioners with the lowest pay tier of the first deputy attorney general.

The Commission serves a critical role in providing regulatory oversight over various regulated utility and transportation industries, ensuring that consumers of the regulated services receive reliable services at affordable rates, and overseeing other important public interest matters. Given these responsibilities, it is important that the

Testimony of DCCA

S.B. 1329

Page 2 of 2

State raise the salaries of the commissioners to attract and retain the most qualified candidates for these critical positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

TESTIMONY OF
JAMES P. GRIFFIN, Ph.D.
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII

TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

February 11, 2019
9:30 a.m.

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

MEASURE: S.B. No. 1329

TITLE: RELATING TO THE SALARY OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSIONERS.

DESCRIPTION: Aligns the salary of the public utilities commission chair with the highest pay tier of a supervising deputy attorney general. Aligns the salary of the other PUC commissioners with the lowest pay tier of the first deputy attorney general.

POSITION:

The Public Utilities Commission is in **support** of this measure and offers the following comments for consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) is in support of this measure, which would provide an increase in compensation for members of the Commission.

The Commission regulates all chartered, franchised, certificated, and registered public service companies operating in the State of Hawaii that provide electricity, telecommunication, gas, private water and sewage, motor and water carrier transportation services and other entities as required by law. During fiscal year 2017-2018, the Commission regulated 1,806 public utilities and other entities in the Hawaii with revenues totaling more than \$2.5 billion. In carrying out its duties, the Commission issued a total of 862 decisions and orders during the fiscal year.

In recent years, the Commission’s workload has grown substantially, particularly in the electricity sector where complex issues relating to the State’s 100% Renewable Portfolio

S.B. No. 1329
Page 2

Standard and other energy policies continue to be investigated. By permitting a salary increase for Commissioners, the State may be able to continue to attract qualified candidates to serve on the Commission in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-1329

Submitted on: 2/9/2019 7:55:06 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2019 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments: