

---

# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

---

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO ADDRESS CERTAIN  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNDERGROUNDING THE STATE'S UTILITY  
FACILITIES AS OUTLINED IN THE 1999 LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE  
BUREAU REPORT ENTITLED "UNDERGROUNDING PUBLIC UTILITY  
LINES".

1 WHEREAS, undergrounding entails replacing overhead electric  
2 and telecommunication cables and facilities with underground  
3 cables and equipment; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, there is widespread community interest in  
6 undergrounding the State's utility facilities to enhance scenic  
7 views, address public health concerns, reduce the risk of wind  
8 damage, and increase system reliability, among other benefits;  
9 and  
10

11 WHEREAS, the advantages of undergrounding were illustrated  
12 in 1992, when Hurricane Iniki downed more than five thousand  
13 utility lines and poles on the island of Kauai, leaving more  
14 than 14,350 homes without power; and  
15

16 WHEREAS, there are also disadvantages to undergrounding,  
17 and all facets of the issue should be considered; and  
18

19 WHEREAS, in 1999, the Legislative Reference Bureau studied  
20 the feasibility of undergrounding the State's utility facilities  
21 in a report entitled "Undergrounding Public Utility Lines"; and  
22

23 WHEREAS, the report outlined several recommendations in  
24 evaluating whether utility lines should be underground and the  
25 conversion of existing overhead to underground lines, which  
26 include:  
27

- 28 (1) Requiring the Public Utilities Commission to value the  
29 aesthetic benefit of the natural landscape of



1 residential and conservation zoned areas above all  
2 else;

3  
4 (2) Requiring the Consumer Advocate to develop measures to  
5 quantify the benefits of undergrounding utility lines;  
6 and

7  
8 (3) Requiring the Public Utilities Commission to establish  
9 a program that provides a tax incentive or a cost  
10 share financing mechanism for the undergrounding of  
11 utility lines; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, although not all the recommendations for  
14 undergrounding the State's utility facilities as outlined in the  
15 1999 Legislative Reference Bureau report entitled  
16 "Undergrounding Public Utility Lines" were legislatively  
17 adopted, the Public Utilities Commission still possesses the  
18 authority as it did in 1999 to mandate the undergrounding of  
19 utility lines; now, therefore,  
20

21 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
22 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the  
23 House of Representatives concurring, that the Public Utilities  
24 Commission is requested to address certain recommendations for  
25 undergrounding the State's utility facilities as outlined in the  
26 1999 Legislative Reference Bureau report entitled  
27 "Undergrounding Public Utility Lines"; and  
28

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission  
30 is requested to adopt the recommendations for undergrounding the  
31 State's utility facilities as outlined in the 1999 Legislative  
32 Reference Bureau report; and  
33

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission  
35 is requested to submit a report to the Legislature no later than  
36 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of  
37 2023 to addresses its reasons for not adopting each  
38 recommendation for undergrounding the State's utility facilities  
39 as outlined in the 1999 Legislative Reference Bureau report; and  
40



- 1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
- 2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
- 3 Public Utilities Commission.

