



**Hawaiian
Electric**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SB 533

Relating to Education

Friday, January 31, 2025

3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Jimmy D. Alberts

Senior Vice President & Chief Operations Officer

Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jimmy D. Alberts and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric **in support of** SB 533, Relating to Education.

Hawaiian Electric supports this bill, which will help schools impacted by the Company's Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program prepare for situations where hazardous weather conditions require preemptive outages for community safety. Hawaiian Electric conducted extensive community outreach during its PSPS planning process, including meeting with numerous government agencies and stakeholders. This included multiple meetings with both executive and leadership teams at the Department of Education, as well as providing updates on our plans as they were refined. Hawaiian Electric has taken steps to minimize the impact of PSPS on customers by installing sectionalizing equipment, which has allowed us to configure the system so that schools on O'ahu were removed from PSPS outage areas, although some schools on Maui and Hawai'i Island remain as they could not be removed using this method.

Hawaiian Electric has hosted and attended several community meetings in communities impacted by the PSPS program to help ensure affected customers are prepared, and we will continue to evaluate ways to support these communities. The funding provided for in this bill would help the Department of Education implement emergency preparedness initiatives for the schools and communities that remain within PSPS areas.

Accordingly, Hawaiian Electric **supports** SB 533. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 01/31/2025

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 0533 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to evaluate school needs to mitigate the impact of the planned public safety power shutoff program.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports SB 533, which seeks funding to assess the impact of the Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program on affected schools. Fourteen Department schools are vulnerable to PSPS events, which disrupt essential services, including communication, meal programs, and accommodations for students and staff reliant on electricity-dependent devices.

The 2023 Maui wildfires underscored the importance of preparedness. The U.S. Department of Education's after-action report identified key areas for improvement, many of which relate to the challenges posed by PSPS events. While the Department has implemented measures to enhance resilience, additional funding is needed to assess long-term solutions.

This measure would provide the necessary resources to:

- Evaluate alternative power solutions, such as generators and solar battery systems, for PSPS-affected schools;
- Assess the feasibility of establishing regional hubs stocked with emergency supplies;
- Develop training and contingency plans to maintain school operations during outages; and
- Assess fire safety measures and accommodations for electricity-dependent students and staff.

The appropriation of \$1,000,000 for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 will allow the Department to conduct these assessments and ensure schools are prepared for future PSPS events.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 533.