

A Bill for an Act Relating to Energy Training.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. The State's ambitious clean energy goals, along with advances in energy technology, have created incentives for the adoption of new energy systems technologies and equipment, including distributed electrical systems such as solar panels and energy storage.

Installation of these modern energy systems has been an economic driver, reduced the State's dependence on imported oil, and helped to protect the environment. However, the increase in construction has placed additional burdens on some county officers and employees. County officers and employees responsible for permitting, inspecting, licensing, and approving projects, including officers and employees at county public works departments, planning and permitting departments, and fire departments, must now remain constantly informed about new technology in the energy sector. The legislature finds, though, that many of these county officers and employees are not provided with the proper training and must either research the standards themselves or pay for their own training. In addition, the lack of training can lead to unnecessary delays in the approval or implementation of a project.

The purpose of this Act is to create a program to provide training to county officers and employees responsible for permitting, inspecting, licensing, and approving energy systems and related technology.

SECTION 2. Chapter 196, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“§196- Energy systems and technology training.** (a) Energy systems and technology training courses shall be established as needed to educate relevant officers and employees of the counties on the various standards and requirements for renewable energy systems and related distributed electricity technologies, including energy storage. The courses, including any materials necessary to implement the courses, shall be developed, designed, prepared, and conducted by the University of Hawaii community colleges, or by a public or private entity contracted by the University of Hawaii community colleges.

(b) The energy systems and technology training courses may include information on:

- (1) New innovations in energy systems and technology, such as recent advancements in distributed electricity technologies and related interaction of these systems and technologies with the electrical grid;
  - (2) The implementation of new and existing energy systems and technology in compliance with international, national, state, and county standards, including building and fire codes; and
  - (3) Any other relevant topic pertaining to the various standards and requirements for renewable energy systems and related technology.
- (c) The University of Hawaii community colleges shall:
- (1) Administer the energy systems and technology training courses;
  - (2) Provide notifications or advertisements of the courses to relevant county officers and employees, including employees at county public works departments, planning and permitting departments, fire departments, and others involved in the permitting, inspection, licensing, and approval of construction projects; and

- (3) Provide the courses at no cost to the participants or for a fee, which may be refunded; provided that funds are available for that purpose.
- (d) The University of Hawaii community colleges may designate its staff to conduct the energy systems and technology training courses or contract with a public or private entity to conduct the courses.
- (e) Either the University of Hawaii community colleges or an entity designated by the University of Hawaii community colleges shall establish a committee composed of stakeholders, including local and national industry representatives from distributed energy systems providers, including solar and energy storage systems, and county representatives from each county who are familiar with the job duties performed by county officers and employees who permit, inspect, license, approve, or otherwise work with energy systems and technology. The committee shall work closely with the staff of the University of Hawaii community colleges and subject-matter experts to:
  - (1) Provide input and guidance on identifying the necessary training areas in which to provide practical training relevant to the range of duties performed by county officers and employees in order to help to eliminate unnecessary delays in permitting, inspection, licensing, or approvals caused by a lack of knowledge and training about energy systems and technology;
  - (2) Provide input and guidance on identifying the related and required training equipment to be incorporated into the training program; and
  - (3) Assist with outreach and buy-in from county officers and employees and constituents to enhance participation in the training.”

SECTION 3. The University of Hawaii community colleges shall submit a report to the legislature describing the progress made in establishing energy systems and technology training courses for county officers and employees as provided in this Act no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2020.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the energy security special fund the sum of \$130,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 to be deposited in the community colleges special fund for energy systems and technology training as provided for in this Act.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.<sup>1</sup>

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

(Approved June 26, 2019.)

**Note**

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.