

MAR 11 2016

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO ENHANCE INDEPENDENCE
AND EFFECTIVENESS.

1 WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission is currently
2 addressing several significant and controversial issues
3 affecting key areas of the economy in the State of Hawaii
4 including energy, water, and water transportation; and
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6 WHEREAS, the Commission's decision making in these critical
7 matters must be independent and objective; and
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9 WHEREAS, administrative staff and support are important to
10 maintain each commissioner's independence; and
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12 WHEREAS, the Commission is composed of three commissioners
13 who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate;
14 and
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16 WHEREAS, it is a best practice among States' public utility
17 regulatory agencies for each commission to have dedicated,
18 independent policy and legal advisors; and
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20 WHEREAS, the commissioners are three independent and equal
21 positions who should have the ability to hire their own staff
22 and advisors; and
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24 WHEREAS, under existing law, only the Chairperson of the
25 Public Utilities Commission has the power to appoint, employ,
26 and dismiss the executive director, professional staff, and
27 other advisors and assistants for the Commission; and
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29 WHEREAS, one of the staff should be a secretary to the
30 commissioners; and
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32 WHEREAS, a goal of the Commission is to re-evaluate and
33 update internal Commission staff procedures to increase the
34 efficiency and effectiveness of Commission activities; and
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S.R. NO. 101

1 WHEREAS, this body finds that there should be more balance
2 between the Chairperson and the other commissioners when
3 determining the selection of staff; now, therefore,
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
6 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016,
7 that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to allow each of
8 its commissioners to appoint, employ, and dismiss a maximum of
9 three professional staff and other advisors, one of whom shall
10 serve as an attorney to the commissioner; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon the expiration of a
13 commissioner's term, the term of employment of the professional
14 staff and other advisors of that commissioner be extended,
15 subject to the approval of the new commissioner to whom the
16 staff and assistants be assigned, or with the approval of at
17 least two commissioners; and
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairperson of the Public
20 Utilities Commission receive concurrence of at least one other
21 commissioner prior to appointing, employing, and dismissing an
22 executive officer; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commissioners of the Public
25 Utilities Commission submit a report to the Legislature no later
26 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
27 of 2017 regarding how the independence and effectiveness of the
28 Public Utilities Commission was enhanced by this measure; and
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
31 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Public
32 Utilities Commission.
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OFFERED BY:

