

JAN 22 2021

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State faces an
2 unprecedented economic crisis due to the coronavirus disease
3 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which has decimated Hawaii's economy
4 and caused its gross domestic product to plummet. By some
5 measures, Hawaii's economy has been hit harder than any other
6 state in the nation.

7 The legislature also finds that this drastic decline in
8 economic activity has disproportionately affected the State's
9 most vulnerable populations. The pandemic forced the shutdown
10 of many sectors of the State's economy, triggering mass layoffs
11 and furloughs and causing the State's seasonally adjusted
12 unemployment to surge from 2.4 per cent in March 2020 to a
13 historical high of 22.3 per cent in April 2020. Despite efforts
14 to reopen the economy, Hawaii still had the second-highest
15 unemployment rate in the nation as of November 2020. With the
16 COVID-19 pandemic continuing to rage throughout the world, most
17 countries experiencing recession, and visitor arrivals to the



1 State not expected to recover to pre-pandemic levels until at
2 least 2024, the State will continue to feel the economic impacts
3 of the pandemic for many years to come.

4 The legislature further finds that, even before the
5 pandemic, renter households in the State already suffered from
6 deleteriously high housing cost burdens, and that the economic
7 impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated this
8 situation. Recent data from the university of Hawaii economic
9 research organization (UHERO) showed that more than eleven
10 thousand Hawaii tenants have fallen behind on their rent
11 payments and that forty per cent of rental tenants have lost
12 their jobs. Modeling from UHERO indicates that up to seventeen
13 thousand households may face an unsustainable change in their
14 housing cost burden by the second quarter of 2021, even as the
15 State's economy slowly recovers. Even in a best-case scenario,
16 the number of individuals facing homelessness will continue to
17 rise in the face of the pandemic. UHERO concluded that, from a
18 policy standpoint, "doing nothing is not a viable option."

19 Accordingly, the legislature finds that it must take
20 immediate action to mitigate the affordable housing crisis
21 through legislation.



1 The purpose of this Act is to provide that whenever the
2 infrastructure or equipment for electric utility service is
3 required to be installed underground for affordable housing
4 within an area that has been designated by a county as a
5 transit-oriented development area, installation of the
6 infrastructure or equipment shall be the responsibility of the
7 electric utility company.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 269, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately
10 designated and to read as follows:

11 "§269- Underground electrical installation; transit-
12 oriented development areas. (a) Whenever infrastructure or
13 equipment for electric utility service is required to be
14 installed underground for affordable housing within an area that
15 has been designated by a county as a transit-oriented
16 development area, installation of the infrastructure or
17 equipment shall be the responsibility of the electric utility
18 company.

19 (b) For the purposes of this section, "affordable housing"
20 shall have the same meaning as in section 201H-57(b)."



S.B. NO. 870

1 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
2 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
3 begun before its effective date.

4 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

5 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DKR", is written over a horizontal line.

S.B. NO. 870

Report Title:

Affordable Housing; Electricity; Transit-Oriented Development

Description:

Establishes that whenever the infrastructure or equipment for electric utility service is required to be installed underground for affordable housing within an area that has been designated by a county as a transit-oriented development area, it shall be the responsibility of the electric utility company to install the infrastructure or equipment.

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