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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii has an aging  
2 electrical infrastructure. According to the American Society of  
3 Civil Engineer's 2019 Hawaii Infrastructure Report Card, outages  
4 in Hawaii are mainly caused by equipment deterioration, cable  
5 faults, automobile accidents, or vegetation. Although  
6 significant capital investments have been made to upgrade and  
7 strengthen utility poles, lines, and equipment against the  
8 increasingly frequent severe storms in recent years, over half  
9 of the existing infrastructure is more than forty years old and  
10 soon will be approaching the end of its expected life cycle.  
11 The security and resilience of Hawaii's critical electrical  
12 infrastructure are fundamental to the health and welfare of the  
13 State's residents, visitors, and employees. Recent weather  
14 events have further highlighted the importance of a resilient  
15 electrical grid and the restoration of electricity in a safe and  
16 efficient manner.



1           The legislature further finds that the construction and  
2 maintenance of overhead and underground high voltage power lines  
3 with distribution and transmission voltages require the  
4 specialized skills of electrical workers, such as journeymen  
5 linemen, foremen, and general foreman, who are all trained and  
6 certified journeyman lineman. To address the need for  
7 individuals qualified to work with high voltage power lines, the  
8 legislature enacted Act 65, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013 (Act  
9 65), which provided a limited exemption from electrician  
10 licensing requirements for individuals employed by electrical  
11 contractors who are retained by a public utility within the  
12 State to perform high voltage work for the public utility and  
13 who are deemed qualified by the public utility. Although the  
14 legislature later extended the law for five more years through  
15 Act 60, Session Laws of 2018 (Act 60), Act 60 sunsets on  
16 June 30, 2023. Continued maintenance due to aging electrical  
17 infrastructure is needed to keep Hawaii's grid resilient. The  
18 legislature also finds that as Hawaii continues to experience a  
19 shortage of electricians, splicers, and linemen in the State who  
20 are experienced and qualified to work with high voltage, it is



1 necessary to make permanent the limited exemption from licensing  
2 requirements for electricians.

3 The purpose of this Act is to make permanent:

- 4 (1) Act 65, provided that public utilities also certify to  
5 the director of labor and industrial relations and to  
6 the board of electricians and plumbers that, after a  
7 hiring call, no electrician sufficiently qualified and  
8 licensed in the State to perform high voltage (six  
9 hundred volts or higher) electrical work applied to  
10 timely perform or complete the necessary job or task  
11 before the public utility recruited outside the State;  
12 and  
13 (2) The requirement for the board of electricians and  
14 plumbers to submit to the legislature reports relating  
15 to high voltage work.

16 SECTION 2. Section 448E-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
17 amended to read as follows:

18 "§448E-13 Exemption of public utility and community  
19 antennae television company personnel[-]; annual reports to the  
20 legislature. (a) The following persons shall be exempt from  
21 this chapter:



- 1           (1) All employees of a public utility within the State  
2                   under a franchise or charter granted by the State,  
3                   which is regulated by the public utilities commission  
4                   and community antennae television company, while so  
5                   employed; and
- 6           (2) Employees of an electrical contractor duly licensed  
7                   under chapter 444; provided that:
- 8                   (A) [~~Such~~] The contractor is retained by a public  
9                           utility within the State under a franchise or  
10                           charter granted by the State, which is regulated  
11                           by the public utilities commission to perform  
12                           high voltage [~~-(six hundred volts or higher)-~~]  
13                           electrical work for the public utility; [~~and~~]
- 14                   (B) The public utility shall certify to the director  
15                           of labor and industrial relations and to the  
16                           board of electricians and plumbers that, after a  
17                           hiring call, no electrician sufficiently  
18                           qualified and licensed in the State to perform  
19                           high voltage electrical work applied to timely  
20                           perform or complete the necessary job or task



1                   before the public utility recruited outside the  
2                   State; and  
3            [~~(B)~~]    (C)    [~~Such~~] The employees are deemed qualified by  
4                    the public utility to perform such high voltage  
5                    electrical work;

6                    provided further that in no circumstance shall [~~such~~]  
7                    the persons be less qualified than the public  
8                    utility's own employees that perform [~~such~~] high  
9                    voltage electrical work[~~-~~]; and provided further that  
10                   for purposes of this section, "high voltage" means six  
11                    hundred volts or higher.

12            (b)    Persons retained by a public utility pursuant to  
13    [+]subsection[+] (a) (2) shall be exempt from the provisions of  
14    section 444-9.5.

15            (c)    The board of electricians and plumbers shall submit  
16    reports to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to  
17    the convening of each regular session. The reports shall  
18    include but not be limited to the following:

19            (1)    Any programs in the State that offer vocational  
20                    training for licensed electricians to perform high  
21                    voltage electrical work;



- 1        (2) Availability of continuing education, training, or
- 2        both, necessary for licensed electricians to acquire
- 3        or keep current those skills related to performing
- 4        high voltage work;
- 5        (3) The number of licensed electricians in the State
- 6        qualified to perform high voltage electrical work; and
- 7        (4) Opportunities for growth in the high voltage work
- 8        subspecialty."

9        SECTION 3. Act 65, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, section 4,  
 10 as amended by Act 60, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, section 2, is  
 11 amended to read as follows:

12        "SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval[+  
 13 ~~provided that on June 30, 2023, this Act shall be repealed and~~  
 14 ~~section 448E-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes, shall be reenacted in~~  
 15 ~~the form in which it read on the day before the effective date~~  
 16 ~~of this Act]."~~

17        SECTION 4. Act 60, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, is amended  
 18 by amending section 3 to read as follows:

19        "SECTION 3. The board of electricians and plumbers shall  
 20 submit reports to the legislature no later than twenty days  
 21 prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2019, 2020,



1 2021, and 2022 [~~7, and 2023~~]. The reports shall include but not  
2 be limited to the following:

3 (1) Any programs in the State that offer vocational  
4 training for licensed electricians to perform high  
5 voltage electrical work;

6 (2) Availability of continuing education, training, or  
7 both, necessary for licensed electricians to acquire  
8 or keep current those skills related to performing  
9 high voltage work;

10 (3) The number of licensed electricians in the State  
11 qualified to perform high voltage electrical work; and

12 (4) Opportunities for growth in the high voltage work  
13 subspecialty."

14 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2030.



**Report Title:**

Electrical Contractors; Licensing; Exemptions; High Voltage

**Description:**

Makes permanent Act 65, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, which provides a limited exemption to the licensing requirements for certain individuals in situations when an electric utility must retain qualified individuals to work with high voltage (six hundred volts or higher) who are not licensed in the State but are otherwise deemed qualified by the electric utility, provided that the public utility certifies to the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations and to the Board of Electricians and Plumbers that, after a hiring call, no electrician sufficiently qualified and licensed in the State to perform high voltage electrical work applied to timely perform or complete the necessary job or task before the public utility recruited outside the State. Also makes permanent the requirement for the Board of Electricians and Plumbers to submit to the Legislature annual reports regarding high voltage electrical contractors. Effective 7/1/2030. (SD1)

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