
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaiian Electric
2 Company's Planned Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program,
3 implemented on July 1, 2024, aims to reduce wildfire risks by
4 proactively shutting off power in high-risk areas during
5 specific weather conditions. While the PSPS program is critical
6 for public safety, the program's implementation poses
7 significant operational challenges for public schools.
8 Currently, fifteen department of education schools and one
9 public charter school are identified as vulnerable to PSPS
10 events. These power outages may disrupt essential services,
11 including communication systems, water access, meal programs,
12 and accommodations for students and staff reliant on
13 electricity-dependent medical devices or assistive technologies.

14 The legislature further finds that maintaining school
15 operations during PSPS events is vital to ensuring educational
16 continuity, providing access to meals, and sustaining a sense of
17 normalcy for students. This is especially critical for students



1 in remote or rural areas, where schools often serve as essential
2 community hubs. To meet this need, schools must prepare for
3 prolonged power outages by implementing measures such as backup
4 power solutions, access to shelf-stable food and clean water,
5 and fire safety protocols.

6 The legislature notes that the devastating wildfire in
7 Lahaina in August 2023 underscored the importance of
8 preparedness and inter-agency coordination in mitigating the
9 impacts of emergencies. The United States Department of
10 Education's after-action report highlighted areas for
11 improvement, many of which align with the challenges posed by
12 the PSPS program.

13 The legislature also notes that the department of education
14 has implemented measures to support recovery and resilience for
15 Maui schools affected by the Lahaina wildfire. These include
16 monthly working group meetings to address fire mitigation,
17 hazardous brush clearance, and community engagement. Funds from
18 the federal Project School Emergency Response to Violence grant
19 have been allocated for critical recovery efforts, including
20 mental health services, transportation for displaced students,
21 and substitute teachers to support staff well-being.



1 The legislature recognizes that lessons learned from the
2 Lahaina wildfire and the department of education's subsequent
3 actions provide a strong foundation for addressing the
4 challenges of the PSPS program. However, additional funding is
5 essential to implement long-term solutions, such as establishing
6 regional hubs equipped with emergency supplies, procuring backup
7 power sources, and providing comprehensive training for staff.
8 These efforts will ensure schools can remain operational during
9 PSPS events, safeguarding the well-being of students and staff
10 while maintaining access to essential services. The legislature
11 believes that further insight is needed on ways to support
12 schools that may be impacted by the PSPS program, including:

- 13 (1) Assessing the viability of using alternative power
14 solutions, such as generators and solar battery
15 systems, for planned safety power shutoff identified
16 schools;
- 17 (2) Establishing regional resource hubs equipped with
18 essential supplies, including water, shelf-stable
19 food, and backup communication tools, to ensure
20 continuity of operations at and schools affected
21 during power outages;



1 (3) Developing contingency plans to enable schools to
2 remain open and safe during power outages and
3 providing related training; and

4 (4) Enhancing fire safety measures and accommodations for
5 students and employees with electricity-dependent
6 needs.

7 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
8 funds to the department of education to conduct a study on
9 methods that will help support schools impacted by the Hawaiian
10 Electric Company's Planned Public Safety Power Shutoff program.

11 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,000,000 or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
14 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
15 2026-2027 to the department of education to conduct a study on
16 methods to support department schools that may be impacted by
17 the Hawaiian Electric Company's Planned Public Safety Power
18 Shutoff program.

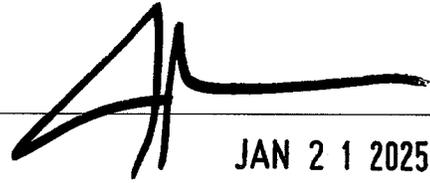
19 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
20 of education for the purposes of this Act.

21 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.



1

INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 21 2025



H.B. NO. 902

Report Title:

Department of Education; Planned Public Safety Power Shutoff;
Hawaiian Electric Company; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to conduct a study on methods to support department schools that may be impacted by the Hawaiian Electric Company's Planned Public Safety Power Shutoff program.

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