
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 and other
6 similar programs are critical for public safety, their
7 implementation pose significant operational challenges for
8 public schools. Currently, fifteen department of education
9 schools and one public charter school are identified as
10 vulnerable to PSPS events. These power outages may disrupt
11 essential services, including communication systems, water
12 access, meal programs, and accommodations for students and staff
13 reliant on electricity-dependent medical devices or assistive
14 technologies.

15 The legislature further finds that maintaining school
16 operations during PSPS events is vital to ensuring educational
17 continuity, providing access to meals, and sustaining a sense of



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

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

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



1 mental health services, transportation for displaced students,
2 and substitute teachers to support staff well-being.

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

16 (1) Assessing the viability of using alternative power
17 solutions, such as generators and solar battery
18 systems, for planned safety power shutoff identified
19 schools;

20 (2) Establishing regional resource hubs equipped with
21 essential supplies, including water, shelf-stable



1 food, and backup communication tools, to ensure
2 continuity of operations at and schools affected
3 during power outages;

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

7 (4) Enhancing fire safety measures and accommodations for
8 students and employees with electricity-dependent
9 needs.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
11 funds to the department of education to conduct a study on
12 methods that will help support schools impacted by electric
13 utilities' planned public safety power shutoff program.

14 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,000,000 or so much
16 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
17 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
18 2026-2027 to the department of education to conduct a study on
19 methods to support department schools that may be impacted by
20 electric utilities' planned public safety power shutoff program.



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

3 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



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 electric utilities' planned public safety power shutoff program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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