STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1475

Honolulu, Hawaii MAR 2 1 , 2025

RE: S.B. No. 191 S.D. 1 H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura Speaker, House of Representatives Thirty-Third State Legislature Regular Session of 2025 State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, to which was referred S.B. No. 191, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ENERGY ASSISTANCE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- Establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii Home Energy Assistance Program to assist eligible households in paying for their energy bills; and
- (2) Require the Public Utilities Commission Public Benefits Fee Administrator to provide certain information and assistance to recipients of the Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Department of Human Services; Public Utilities Commission; City and County of Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency; Hawaiian Electric; Hawai'i Workers Center; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Coalition Earth; Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group; Hawai'i Energy; Ohana Unity Party; and four individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from Tax Foundation of Hawaii.



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Your Committee finds that Hawaii households face significant energy burden. In 2024, over twenty percent of households in the State reported foregoing critical expenses such as food or medicine to pay their energy bill in full. The State ranked fifth in the nation for highest average household electricity burden. Furthermore, households living below the federal poverty level spent approximately twenty percent of their income on electricity costs, over nine times higher than the state average. Relatedly, disconnections rates have more than doubled from approximately five thousand nine hundred in 2018 to roughly twelve thousand eight hundred in 2023.

Your Committee further finds that the existing federal program for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) remains woefully inadequate for the State's needs. Despite having the nation's highest household electricity costs, the State receives the lowest LIHEAP funding nationwide, as the funding formula heavily favors states with high heating needs. Only about six percent of federally income-eligible households have received LIHEAP heating assistance over the past four years. This measure addresses this gap in assistance by establishing a state program to assist eligible households in paying for their energy bills.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$5,000,000.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 191, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce,

SCOT Z. MATAYOSHI, Chair



State of Hawaii House of Representatives The Thirty-third Legislature

Record of Votes of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Bill/Resolution No.: SB191, SD1, HD1 Committee Referral: EEP/HSH, CPC, FIN Date: 3/19/25					
The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.					
The recommendation is to:  Pass, unamended (as is)  Pass, with amendments (HD)  Hold    Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)					
CPC Members	A	yes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. MATAYOSHI, Scot Z. (C)					
2. CHUN, Cory M. (VC)		$\checkmark$			
3. ILAGAN, Greggor					
4. ICHIYAMA, Linda					
5. IWAMOTO, Kim Coco					
6. KONG, Sam Satoru		V			
7. LOWEN, Nicole E.					
8. MARTEN, Lisa					
9. TAM, Adrian K.					
10. PIERICK, Elijah					
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TOTAL (10)		7		l	2
The recommendation is:  Adopted  Not Adopted    If joint referral,					
Vice Chair's or designee's signature:					
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee Duplicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office Duplicate (Pink) – HMSO					