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# 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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