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DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Thursday, February 5, 2026
9:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1567, RELATING TO ENERGY EQUITY**

Chair Lowen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Angelo, and I am the Executive Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Division of Consumer Advocacy. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to require: (1) the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to establish residential electricity rate structures that prioritize affordability and equity; (2) the Commission to establish a lifeline baseline performance standard, a medical essential needs energy program, and a new tariff; (3) electric utilities to file revised tariffs no later than twelve months after the Commission has issued a final decision and order under this Act; and (4) the Commission to convene a stakeholder process for developing and implementing this Act.

The Department fully appreciates the intent of this measure. Customers that are both low-income and have certain medical vulnerabilities that necessitate continuous access to electricity require additional protections to help ensure continued access to

electricity. The Department notes that the Hawaiian Electric Companies' have a Special Medical Needs Rate Program that provides customers a discount of \$0.04 per kilowatt-hour up to a maximum discount on a monthly bill of \$20. The program is currently funded by both Hawaiian Electric's shareholders and customers.¹ However, enrollment was capped at 2,000 residential customers for the entirety of the Companies' service territory and the program capacity has been reached. For members/customers of Kauai Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC), the Medical Device Power Backup Rebate Program was established on January 1, 2026, which provides members/customers who rely on a life-supporting medical device and are signed up on KIUC's disability/special medical needs list (verified by a medical professional), with a rebate up to \$200.00 per account for the purchase of a qualifying backup power solution.²

In June 2025, the Commission opened a proceeding to analyze current electric utility disconnection practices to consider whether disconnection policy revisions are appropriate (Disconnection Docket). The Commission intends to: (1) consider whether new disconnection policies should be adopted that could significantly reduce disconnections; (2) help disconnected customers manage their debt; (3) make it easy for customers to re-connect for service; and (4) increase access to energy efficiency measures that can lower bills and prevent disconnections.

The Department, through its Division of Advocacy, is participating in this Disconnection Docket (with the intent of focusing the docket on the goal of "Keeping Customers Connected") and offers that the work in this docket may be a straightforward means to help ensure that special medical needs customers stay connected by considering solutions such as requiring the electric utilities to maintain a minimum level of electricity to ensure that medically vulnerable customer's basic needs are being met by having sufficient electricity to meet their basic needs if they are unable to make their electricity bill payment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

¹ Hawaiian Electric's Letter to the Commission, Subject: Docket No. 2020-0056 LIM+ Program Hawaiian Electric's Implementation Plan, filed on February 4, 2022.

² [Medical Device Power Backup | Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative](#).

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
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Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the
House Committee on
Energy & Environmental Protection

Thursday, February 5, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

Measure: H.B. No. 1567
Title: RELATING TO ENERGY EQUITY.

Position:

The Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this measure; however, the Commission has concerns with the impact of the measure and offers the following comments for consideration.

Comments:

The Commission supports the intent of this bill to serve the public interest through prioritization of affordability and equity in electricity cost considerations.

The Commission has been examining affordability initiatives and energy equity policies extensively over the last several years, particularly through efforts in the Energy Equity and Justice Docket, and as identified through the Commission’s Updated Inclinations White Paper,¹ as well as in response to Governor Green’s Executive Order No. 25-01.²

The Commission supports exploration of Lifeline Baseline Performance Standards and a Medical Essential Needs Energy Program to further examine policy options that address

¹ See the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission’s 2024 Inclinations on the Future of Energy in Hawaii: https://puc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Hawaii-PUC-Energy-Inclinations-White-Paper-FINAL.12.31.24_signed.pdf

² See Public Utilities Commission Implementation of Executive Order No. 25-01 <https://puc.hawaii.gov/energy/implementation-of-executive-order-no-25-01/>

energy burden while enhancing public health protections for households with medically essential electricity needs.

However, the Commission also observes that H.B. 1567 proposes prescriptive statutory language regarding docketed proceedings and rate structures that may impact the existing regulatory compact and utilities' ability to recover their prudently incurred costs and, therefore, respectfully requests that the Committee consider the following amendments highlighted in the attached bill draft.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SECTION 2. Chapter 269, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§269- Lifeline and medical essential needs electricity protections. (a) The public utilities commission ~~shall initiate a docketed proceeding to establish residential electricity rate structures that~~ may consider electric utility proposals to establish a Lifeline Baseline Performance Standard and Medical Essential Needs Energy Program, while considering the following objectives:

- (1) ~~Maintain Address~~ affordability for essential household electricity use;
- (2) ~~Reduce Consider~~ energy burden for low-income and medically fragile households;
- (3) Support medically necessary electricity consumption;
- (4) ~~Align with the performance-based regulation framework under section 269-16.1~~ Promote resilience during outages and service disruptions; and
- (5) Support ~~equitable access to distributed energy resources~~ energy equity and climate resilience objectives.

(b) The public utilities commission ~~shall~~ may establish a lifeline baseline performance standard in response to electric utility proposals that reflects the monthly electricity consumption necessary to meet essential household needs, ~~determined through the docket record and based on evidence related to~~ including considerations for:

- (1) Household size and multigenerational residence;
- (2) Climate zone, island-specific heat risk, and extreme temperature trends; and
- (3) Household medical and health-related electricity needs; and.

~~(4) Relevant data required under section 269-124.~~

~~The public utilities commission may approve regionally differentiated baselines supported by evidence in the docket record.~~

~~(c) The public utilities commission shall may establish a medical essential needs energy program to protect households with medically essential electricity requirements. The program shall may include:~~

- ~~(1) Provide Providing for an enhanced baseline allowance at the lifeline rate for certified medical need;~~
- ~~(2) Allow Allowing for certification by licensed healthcare providers, including via telehealth;~~
- ~~(3) Prohibit Prohibiting disconnection of certified households during such conditions as heat advisories, grid reliability disruptions, and healthcare emergencies; and~~
 - ~~(A) During National Weather Service heat advisories;~~
 - ~~(B) During declared grid reliability or healthcare emergencies; and~~
 - ~~(C) Without a documented offer of a payment arrangement and individualized assessment of health risk; and~~
- ~~(4) Ensure Ensuring that participation does not affect eligibility for any other assistance or distributed energy resource customer program; and~~
- ~~(5) Incentivizing distributed energy resource adoption to address both reliability and affordability concerns.~~

~~(d) The public utilities commission shall establish, in the docket required under this section, either a rising block tariff for residential customers or a time-varying or alternative tariff that achieves affordability and equity~~

~~outcomes equivalent to a rising block tariff, as demonstrated in the docket record.~~

~~Any tariff approved under this subsection shall:~~

- ~~(1) Preserve affordable access to essential and medically essential electricity use;~~
- ~~(2) Avoid regressive cost shifts that disproportionately burden low-income or medically fragile households;~~
- ~~(3) Encourage efficient electricity use and distributed energy resource integration;~~
- ~~(4) Integrate with performance incentive mechanisms and multi-year rate planning under section 269-16.1; and~~
- ~~(5) Be supported by an equity impact analysis included in the final decision and order.~~

~~(c) The public utilities commission shall ensure that any fixed charge or minimum bill approved under this section:~~

- ~~(1) Does not increase the average energy burden of low-income or medically fragile households;~~
- ~~(2) Is demonstrated in the docket record to be non-regressive; and~~
- ~~(3) Includes a published equity impact analysis as part of the final decision and order.~~

~~The public utilities commission shall consider alternatives to fixed charges, including performance incentive mechanisms, where necessary to achieve the objectives of this section.~~

~~(f) Costs incurred to implement this section may only be recovered through customer rates if the public utilities commission finds, in the docket record, that the costs are prudent and will not increase the energy burden of low-income or medically fragile households. The public utilities commission may require shareholder contributions when appropriate under performance-based regulation.~~

(gd) To the extent that a lifeline baseline standard or medical essential needs program is explored or established, the public utilities commission and electric utilities shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session. The report shall include:

- (1) Lifeline and medical program enrollment;
- (2) Disconnection notices and completed disconnections, disaggregated by island and zip code;
- (3) Household electricity burden by income decile;
- (4) Access to and enrollment in distributed energy resource programs; and
- (5) Heat-risk and emergency event data affecting household energy stability."

~~SECTION 3. Each electric utility shall file revised residential tariffs implementing section 269, Hawaii Revised Statutes, as added by this Act, within twelve months after the public utilities commission issues a final decision and order in the docketed proceeding required under this Act.~~

~~SECTION 4. (a) The public utilities commission shall convene a stakeholder process to support implementation of this Act.~~

~~(b) Stakeholders shall include, at minimum, the consumer advocate and Hawaii state energy office. The public utilities commission shall invite the following to be participants:~~

- ~~(1) Disability rights organizations;~~
- ~~(2) Health care providers and elder care organizations;~~
- ~~(3) Environmental and energy justice organizations; and~~
- ~~(4) Electric utilities.~~

~~(c) To the extent practicable, this process shall be integrated with ongoing public utilities commission proceedings~~

~~related to advanced rate design, energy equity, or utility
disconnection policies.~~

SECTION 53. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 64. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:10:33 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nakoolani Warrington	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1567

Aloha,

We, Kūpuna for the Mo‘opuna, a hui of Hawaiian Homes Commission Act kūpuna beneficiary farmers from Pana‘ewa, Hawai‘i, **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1567.**

HB 1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and overall well-being.

We strongly urge you to **SUPPORT and PASS HB 1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo.



Testimony Before the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

By Scott Sato
Government Affairs & Energy Services Manager
Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative
4463 Pahe'e Street, Suite 1, Līhu'e, Hawai'i, 96766-2000

Thursday, February 5, 2026; 9:00 am
Conference Room #325 & Videoconference

House Bill No. 1567 – RELATING TO ENERGY EQUITY

To the Honorable Chair Nicole Lowen, Vice Chair Amy Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) is a not-for-profit utility providing electrical service to more than 34,000 commercial and residential members.

KIUC opposes this measure.

KIUC is committed to providing safe, reliable, clean electricity to its customers at the lowest possible rates. Since becoming an electric cooperative 23 years ago, KIUC's rates have gone from being the highest in the state – roughly 70% higher than rates on O'ahu – to often being the lowest rates in the state since 2022. KIUC has achieved this remarkable turnaround using a variety of strategies including cost control measures (e.g., reduced staffing levels), debt restructuring, and replacing oil-fired generation with lower-cost renewables at fixed prices.

KIUC recognizes that some of its customers struggle to make ends meet, and that electricity bills contribute to the relatively high cost of living that has been prevalent in the State of Hawai'i for decades. KIUC offers numerous financial assistance programs, such as the federally-funded H-HEAP program, to members who meet qualification requirements. H-HEAP subsidizes income-qualified members' utility payments by a total of \$300,000-\$400,000 per year. In addition, the KIUC Charitable Foundation, a separate, not-for-profit entity, provides assistance to members in financial need through grant funds administered by Kaua'i Economic Opportunity and Catholic Charities of Hawai'i. KIUC will also conduct home energy audits to assist members in reducing their energy use, which results directly in bill savings.

It is important to recognize that electricity bills are only one factor contributing to the very serious issue of affordability. As has been well-established by Aloha United Way through their comprehensive ALICE reports (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), an estimated 45% of households in Hawai'i are below the ALICE threshold: meaning they earn above the Federal Poverty Level but do not earn enough to afford basic expenses in the county where they live.

In 2022, the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission (PUC) opened the Energy Equity and Justice Docket (No. 2022-0250). KIUC has participated in the so-called Equity Docket since it was opened and has been actively involved in the Disconnections Docket (No. 2025-0284) as well. KIUC appreciates the opportunity to explore ways to reduce and avoid disconnections through this docket. In December 2025 at technical meetings convened by the PUC, KIUC reported that its monthly disconnection rate has declined by 19% in both 2024 and 2025. KIUC's disconnection rate is currently at roughly 0.24%: a fraction of the estimated 1% average U.S. disconnection rate as reported in a 2023 Congressional Research Service Report. Even with this relatively low disconnection rate, KIUC continues to identify and deploy new strategies for low- and moderate-income customers to avoid service interruption.

KIUC believes it would be prudent for the PUC to conclude its work on the Equity and Disconnection dockets before legislation such as HB 1567 is considered. After research is completed, these dockets could identify additional policies, procedures and legislation that could be implemented to meet the needs HB 1567 is targeted to address. We therefore request that this measure be deferred until such time as these dockets are concluded.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:45:16 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Free Access Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports HB1567. Free public access to basic utilities should not be abridged.

[HB1567](#) directs the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to ensure that electricity for essential needs remains affordable, and to establish cutoff protections for households that may be especially harmed by energy disconnections.

Among its provisions, the bill specifically directs the PUC to identify the minimum amount of energy needed to provide essential electric services for all residents; to develop fairer billing structures that keep the cost of electricity for these services affordable; and to work to ensure continued delivery of electricity to meet critical medical needs of vulnerable residents, such as those who rely on oxygen machines or refrigerated medications, in the event of weather events, emergencies, or their inability to pay their electrical bills.

Mahalo for your time and hopefully your support!

John & Rita Shockley Coordinators: Free Access Coalition



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

February 4, 2025

9:00AM

Conference Room 325

In **SUPPORT** of **HB1567**: Relating to Energy Equity

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i offers the following testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB1567, which would mitigate the impacts of our high energy costs and the harms of ever-increasing utility disconnections in an equitable and common-sense manner.

Hawai'i's high energy and other costs combined with our comparatively low incomes have created a growing energy insecurity crisis in our islands. Last May, CivilBeat reported that electric service disconnections on O'ahu increased from 3,650 in 2019, to approximately 8,300 in 2023, to over 10,000 in 2024. Disconnections on Hawai'i Island similarly increased from 1,200 in 2019, to 2,800 in 2023, to 3,300 in 2024. These data indicate that a large and growing number of local residents—including low-income families, kūpuna, renters, and medically fragile individuals—may be facing impossible choices between paying for electricity and meeting other basic needs like rent, groceries, and healthcare.

HB1567 provides much-needed mechanisms to address some of the greatest harms of this crisis, through an equitable and common-sense framework. Specifically, it lays out a process for the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to approve “rising block tariffs” or similar rate structures that keep the costs of baseline, “essential” energy use affordable for all utility customers. It further directs the PUC to take steps to protect medically fragile households from disconnections that could threaten the health, safety, and lives of their residents. Notably, the bill's provision for a stakeholder and expert advisory group to include voices from elder care, disability rights, and environmental justice communities will also ensure the PUC fully understands the lived realities of those who may be the most impacted by energy insecurity and rising energy costs. By stabilizing the essential energy needs of our communities, HB1567 lays a foundation for a more just, healthy, and resilient Hawai'i, and affirms that access to essential power is a matter of significant public interest.

Therefore, we strongly urge this Committee to **PASS** HB1567.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:57:43 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Michele Nihipali, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:13:41 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members:

I strongly support HB1567.

Electricity is an essential service, yet too many households in Hawai'i face disconnection because of rising energy costs and an already high cost of living. No one should have to choose between keeping the lights on and paying for basic necessities. The growing number of disconnections shows this problem is worsening.

HB1567 is a necessary and practical step to keep essential electricity affordable, reduce the risk of disconnections, and protect the health and stability of our communities, especially for those most vulnerable.

I urge you to pass HB1567 to ensure all households have access to reliable, affordable electricity.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:14:28 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dee Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1567.

Electricity is a basic necessity, yet rising costs are forcing too many households to face disconnection. HB1567 helps keep essential electricity affordable and protects vulnerable residents from losing this critical service.

I urge you to pass HB1567.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:05:33 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Bo Breda, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Bo Breda

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:06:47 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Peter Wilson, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter Wilson

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:35:49 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John NAYLOR	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My Name is John Naylor, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

John Naylor Makawao

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:44:25 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Earl Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Earl Kim, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Earl J. Kim

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:09:32 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Hughey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, and Committee on Finance Hearing Date: February 2026 Measure: HB 1567 – Relating to Energy Equity

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Justin Hughey, and I am a 2nd-grade teacher here in Hawaii. I am writing today in strong support of HB 1567.

As a teacher, my job is to ensure that my students are ready to learn the moment they step into my classroom. However, over the past year, I have seen the "Big Beautiful Bill" from Washington and the subsequent federal funding cuts to Hawaii create a "mess" that is walking into my classroom every single day in the form of hungry, stressed, and exhausted children.

When federal support for SNAP and Medicaid is slashed, it is our local families who pay the price. But for many of my students' families, the burden doesn't stop there. Hawaii has the highest electricity rates in the nation, and as federal assistance disappears, my students' parents are being forced to make an impossible choice: keep the lights on so their child can do their homework, or put food on the table.

HB 1567 is a lifeline. By establishing a "lifeline baseline performance standard" and prioritizing energy equity, this bill ensures that every family in our community has access to the essential electricity they need to survive and thrive.

The federal government's decision to cut our funding while passing massive tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy has left Hawaii in a hole. We are being forced to raise taxes on the wealthy—the ones who actually got us into this mess—to bridge the gap, but we also must reform our utility structures to protect the most vulnerable.

When a 7-year-old comes to school tired because their family couldn't afford to run a fan during a heatwave, or when they can't complete an assignment because their power was disconnected, that is a failure of our system. This bill creates a "medical essential needs energy program" and

prohibits disconnections during health emergencies—protections that are absolutely vital for the families I serve.

If we want our children to succeed, we have to stabilize their homes. We cannot control the "Big Beautiful" failures of the federal government, but we can control how we treat our own people here in Hawaii. I urge you to pass HB 1567 to ensure that energy is treated as a right, not a luxury reserved for the few.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Hawaii's future.

Sincerely,

Justin Hughey
Democratic Party of Hawaii, State Special Committee
Education Caucus Rep.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:56:24 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri Zacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Keri Zacher, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.
Sincerely, Keri Zacher

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:29:16 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here’s a polished, evidence-backed, and persuasive version of your HB1567 testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Kēhau Lucas, and I strongly support HB1567, which ensures affordability and equity in electricity bills while protecting vulnerable households from utility disconnections.

Background and Need:

Hawai‘i faces some of the highest electricity rates in the nation, while many residents experience low or fixed incomes. This combination has led to alarming rates of utility disconnections. In 2024 alone, over 10,000 residential households were disconnected, more than three times the number prior to the pandemic. Many affected households include extremely low-income families, kūpuna, renters, and medically vulnerable residents who rely on electricity for life-sustaining equipment or refrigerated medications. These households are often forced to choose between paying for electricity or other essential needs like food, rent, or healthcare.

Provisions of HB1567:

HB1567 directs the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to:

1. Ensure electricity for essential needs remains affordable, identifying the minimum energy required for basic household services.
2. Develop fair billing structures that make these essential services affordable for all residents.
3. Establish cutoff protections to prevent disconnections for households that would face serious harm, including medically vulnerable residents who rely on oxygen, refrigeration for medications, or other critical medical equipment.
4. Plan for continued electricity delivery during emergencies, weather events, or periods of financial hardship.

These provisions are rooted in both public health and social equity principles, ensuring that no resident is left without essential energy services. Access to reliable electricity is not only a matter of fairness but a critical component of health, safety, and community resilience.

Conclusion:

HB1567 provides a practical and compassionate framework to protect Hawai'i's most vulnerable households, reduce the harms of utility disconnections, and promote equitable access to essential services. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB1567.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha 'āina,
Kēhau Lucas

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:27:32 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Rodar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Jodi Rodar and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jodi Rodar

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:03:38 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Christy Shaver, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Christy Shaver

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:34:21 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Lauren, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui to the introducers of this bill and for the opportunity to testify!

Me ka mahalo,

Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:36:22 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

It is a breath of fresh air that HB1567 supports energy protections as a basic and affordable need for economically challenged residents. Actually, it is shocking that such a positive bill is up for consideration.

Please keep up this good work by **PASSING HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:29:36 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB1567.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to PASS HB1567 to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Stacey Alapai, Maui

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:54:12 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is William Reese Liggett, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

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I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
William Reese Liggett

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:17:59 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1567, which directs the Public Utilities Commission to redesign residential electricity rates with affordability as a central priority.

Electricity is essential infrastructure that powers our homes and supports our families' health and wellbeing. For many households in Hawai'i, monthly electric bills represent a significant portion of household budgets, particularly for families with limited incomes, kūpuna, keiki, and residents who rely on medical equipment.

HB 1567 offers a thoughtful approach by establishing lifeline rate standards, creating protections for medically vulnerable residents, and directing the PUC to design rates with household affordability as a guiding principle.

When electricity costs consume a large share of household income, families have less available for other essential needs like housing, food, and healthcare. This measure recognizes that energy affordability is connected to overall household financial stability and quality of life.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1567.

Mahalo for your consideration and your service to our community.

Respectfully,
Ezgi Green

Waialua, O'ahu

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:46:18 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Lorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Anne M. Lorenzo, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo piha for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Lorenzo

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:46:58 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Nawilis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and other committee members,

My name is Cindy Nawilis, and I am submitting this written testimony in support of HB1567.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:00:34 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:13:57 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Corpuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Teri Corpuz, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Teri Corpuz

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:18:11 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

As a co-founder and organizer of the Upcountry Energy Resilience Project and a co-founder of the #PowerBack Project, I know that over the last two years, Maui residents have faced utility bills that doubled from \$200/month to \$400/month with no clear explanation, while at the same time experiencing increasing and longer power outages, many of which are not connected to PSPS events.

It is unconscionable that Maui residents risk disconnections for a service that is both unaffordable and unreliable.

HB1567 is a common-sense and much needed measure to prevent a looming energy unaffordability crisis that could inflict significant harm on our public health, economic stability, and social fabric. It will help to ensure energy for essential services remains affordable for all households even as energy costs increase, and mitigate the harshest impacts of rate increases and potential energy disconnections on our most vulnerable households.

I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:50:26 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:59:23 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Seikai Darcy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I urge you to support HB 1567. As someone who works with residents in poverty I was shocked to learn the deposit requirements to begin electrical connections. The costs are often the busting point for many on limited and fixed incomes.

This bill gives me hope as it finally recognizes the extraordinary challenges many face to keep electricity on or purchase food or a bus ticket. I am grateful for all those who have done the research to understand how important this assistance is to so many. I can speak for Maui County in that we cannot afford one more person to fall into desperation and loose electricity or housing. Loss of electricity is critical to health and safety. Mahalo for all you do!

With appreciation,

Lisa Darcy, Kula, Maui, HI

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:09:59 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support his measure towards safeguarding our communities and ensuring that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

LATE

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:25:26 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

My name is Emily Gambino, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1567**.

Electricity is a fundamental necessity for all households in Hawai‘i, yet many of our residents live under the constant threat of disconnection due to high energy costs and our overall cost of living. No one should have to choose between paying for electricity to meet their essential needs - such as refrigerating food or medicine - or paying for other basic necessities like rent, groceries, and healthcare. However, with 10,000 electrical disconnections in 2024, up from just over 8,000 in 2023, and 3,650 in 2019, it is clear that this is a reality faced by a significant and growing number of community members.

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I strongly urge you to **PASS HB1567** to safeguard our communities and ensure that reliable, affordable electricity is accessible to every household in our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Emily Gambino

LATE

HB-1567

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:06:07 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to support HB 1567 because I support electricity affordability and equity. Mahalo!