

JAN 23 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ENERGY PROJECTS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State is on a
2 path to one hundred per cent renewable energy by 2045, with
3 significant investment in energy infrastructure including
4 utility-scale solar and wind farms, battery storage, grid
5 modernization, electric vehicle charging, and firm power
6 generation plants. However, the benefits of the State's clean
7 energy transition have not been shared equitably, with the
8 ability of wealthy homeowners to install rooftop solar and
9 access tax credits and rebates while renters, apartment
10 residents, and working families still pay some of the highest
11 electric rates in the nation. Rural families, low-income
12 households, and Native Hawaiian communities continue to lack
13 access to the benefits of major energy projects that are sited
14 near them and are disproportionately impacted by energy
15 infrastructure.

16 The legislature further finds that major energy projects
17 can be approved without community input which fosters conflict,



1 lawsuits, and delays for construction that derail the State's
2 clean energy goals. Addressing the inequity of electricity
3 bills in proportion to income between working families and
4 wealthy households must be a state priority. Therefore, major
5 energy projects should be subjected to energy equity impact
6 assessments and community input in order to protect working
7 families from elevated costs and promote local economic
8 opportunity.

9 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
10 public utilities commission to hold at least two community
11 meetings before approving a major energy project that would be
12 hosted in the affected community.

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

16 "§269- Major energy projects; community meetings. (a)
17 The commission shall hold not less than two public community
18 meetings to discuss and receive input from the community on
19 potential major energy projects that would be hosted in the
20 affected community.



1 (b) For the purposes of this section "major energy
2 projects" means projects with a total capital cost not less than
3 \$10,000,000 or that require commission docket approval. "Major
4 energy projects" may include but are not limited to:
5 (1) Utility-scale solar photovoltaic systems;
6 (2) Wind energy generating facilities;
7 (3) Battery storage systems;
8 (4) Grid modernization and transmission systems;
9 (5) Electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
10 (6) Geothermal energy facilities;
11 (7) Firm power generating facilities; and
12 (8) Utility rate cases affecting residential customer
13 rates."

14 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:  _____



S.B. NO. 2939

Report Title:

PUC; Major Energy Projects; Community Meetings

Description:

Requires the Public Utilities Commission to hold not less than two community meetings before approving a major energy project that would be hosted in the affected community.

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