

FEB 24 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH A
DEDICATED PANEL OF COMMISSIONERS TO OVERSEE MATTERS RELATED
TO INTRASTATE WATER CARRIERS AND MARITIME COMMERCE.

1 WHEREAS, the State's intrastate water carriers are
2 essential to the Hawaii's economic stability and public
3 well-being as they ensure the reliable movement of food, fuel,
4 medicine, construction materials, and consumer goods across the
5 islands; and

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7 WHEREAS, unlike most states, Hawaii relies on maritime
8 transportation as a core component of its internal supply chain
9 rather than a supplemental mode of transport; and

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11 WHEREAS, regulation of intrastate water carriers involves
12 highly technical and operational considerations, including
13 vessel safety, harbor operations, emergency preparedness,
14 infrastructure investment, workforce requirements, and long-term
15 maritime system planning; and

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17 WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regulates
18 intrastate water carriers alongside electric, gas,
19 telecommunications, and other utilities, despite the
20 fundamentally distinct operational characteristics of maritime
21 transportation; and

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23 WHEREAS, the complexity and criticality of maritime
24 transportation warrant specialized regulatory focus and subject
25 matter expertise to ensure informed, timely, and consistent
26 decision-making; and

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28 WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation, through its
29 Harbors Division, has direct responsibility for harbor
30 infrastructure and maritime operations and serves as a key
31 technical and operational partner to intrastate water carriers;
32 and

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34 WHEREAS, closer alignment and structured coordination
35 between the PUC's regulatory function and maritime operational



1 expertise would strengthen regulatory effectiveness without
2 altering existing statutory authority; and

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4 WHEREAS, establishing a dedicated maritime or intrastate
5 commerce panel within the PUC would improve regulatory clarity,
6 continuity, and capacity as the State advances clean energy,
7 decarbonization, resilience, and supply-chain security goals;
8 and

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10 WHEREAS, strengthening specialized oversight of intrastate
11 water carriers supports supply-chain resilience, cost
12 containment, emergency response readiness, and long-term
13 investment certainty for businesses and communities across the
14 State; now, therefore,

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16 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
17 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
18 that the Public Utilities Commission is requested to establish a
19 dedicated panel of commissioners, or other formal internal
20 structure, to oversee matters related to intrastate water
21 carriers and maritime commerce; and

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23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the PUC is encouraged to ensure
24 that the oversight panel is supported by appropriate technical
25 expertise, maritime operational knowledge, and stakeholder
26 engagement to address the unique characteristics of intrastate
27 maritime transportation; and

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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body encourages enhanced
30 coordination between the PUC, Department of Transportation,
31 maritime operators, labor, and other stakeholders to inform
32 regulatory decisions and improve system-wide outcomes; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body affirms that
35 specialized maritime oversight within the existing regulatory
36 framework would strengthen interisland supply-chain resilience,
37 support the State's clean energy transition, and promote
38 reliable and affordable maritime transportation residents and
39 businesses; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
42 Resolution be transmitted to Director of Transportation; Chair



1 of the Public Utilities Commission; Deputy Director of
2 Transportation, Harbors Division; and the Chamber of Commerce
3 Hawaii.
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OFFERED BY: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end, positioned over a horizontal line.