

TESTIMONY OF RANDY IWASE
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

April 4, 2016
2:00 p.m.

MEASURE: H.B. No. 1851, H.D. 1, S.D. 1

TITLE: RELATING TO THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

DESCRIPTION:

This measure allows commissioners of the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) to attend public hearings held on islands that they do not reside by teleconference or video conference, provided the hearing is not a contested case hearing. This measure also requires that commissioners who are residents of a county other than the city and county of Honolulu be provided with an unspecified per diem compensation “for the days on which actual service is rendered.” Finally, this measure explicitly allows for a person’s island of residence to be used as criterion when determining the person’s qualification to serve as a commissioner.

COMMENTS:

The Commission appreciates the option to allow a commissioner to attend public hearings held on islands that they do not reside via teleconference or video conference, provided that the public hearing is not a contested case hearing. The Commission also notes that establishing the ability to exercise this option could be costly, particularly if the service employed would afford a level of functionality and reliability similar to that which could be expected if the commissioner were physically present.

The Commission also notes that providing per diem compensation for commissioners who are residents of a county other than the city and county of Honolulu is fair given the costs associated with working outside one’s county of residence. Compensation for lodging and transportation should also be considered.

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Finally, the Commission notes that the Governor should be given wide discretion in selecting qualified candidates for appointment as commissioners. The language in this measure preserves that discretion.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.