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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO ACT IN THE PUBLIC  
INTEREST REGARDING SOLAR ENERGY INTERCONNECTION, AND TO NOT  
BE INFLUENCED BY PRESSURE FROM A REGULATED UTILITY.

1           WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission is responsible for  
2 regulating all chartered, franchised, certificated, and  
3 registered public utility companies that provide electricity,  
4 gas, telecommunications, private water and sewage, and motor and  
5 water carrier transportation services in the State; and

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7           WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission's primary purpose  
8 is to ensure that regulated companies efficiently and safely  
9 provide their customers with adequate and reliable services at  
10 just and reasonable rates, while providing regulated companies  
11 with a fair opportunity to earn a reasonable rate of return; and

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13           WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission has statutory  
14 authority to establish and enforce applicable state statutes,  
15 administrative rules, and decisions, and to set policies and  
16 standards; and

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18           WHEREAS, in addition to the Public Utilities Commission's  
19 traditional duty to oversee and regulate public utilities to  
20 ensure the provision of essential and reliable service at just  
21 and reasonable rates, the Legislature has entrusted the  
22 Commission with increased authority and discretion in  
23 implementing the State's clean energy policies; and

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25           WHEREAS, the State's abundant sunshine is an important  
26 source of clean solar energy that can be captured and harnessed  
27 by photovoltaic systems; and

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1           WHEREAS, many electricity consumers have installed solar  
2 energy systems at their homes, businesses, or other facilities;  
3 and

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5           WHEREAS, many additional electricity consumers also desire  
6 to install solar energy systems; and

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8           WHEREAS, approximately two thousand six hundred  
9 applications are currently pending statewide from consumers who  
10 seek to connect solar energy systems to Hawaiian Electric  
11 Company electricity grids; and

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13           WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Electric Companies are subsidiaries  
14 of Hawaiian Electric Industries and include Hawaiian Electric  
15 Company on Oahu, Maui Electric Company on Maui, and Hawaii  
16 Electric Light Company on Hawaii island; and

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18           WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission sets the rate that  
19 those companies must pay customers for each kilowatt-hour of  
20 excess electric power that a customer's solar energy system  
21 feeds into the company's electricity grid; and

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23           WHEREAS, on January 20, 2015, Hawaiian Electric Companies  
24 requested that the Public Utilities Commission reduce the rate  
25 that the utility pays solar customers on Oahu for excess  
26 electric power from twenty-nine cents to fifteen cents per  
27 kilowatt-hour, and for similar reductions on the neighbor  
28 islands; and

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30           WHEREAS, Hawaii Electric Light Company recently sent  
31 letters informing applicants in areas with high solar energy  
32 production that it will not approve their requests to connect  
33 solar systems to the electricity grid until the Public Utilities  
34 Commission decides on the request to reduce the rate for excess  
35 energy fed into the grid; and

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37           WHEREAS, these letters state that "Until the Public  
38 Utilities Commission makes a decision on our proposal, it is in  
39 the best interest of all customers and the utility to suspend  
40 approving additional interconnections in areas highly saturated  
41 with distributed generation other than interconnections for



1 those customers who applied for interconnection on or before  
2 Oct. 22, 2014," and

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4 WHEREAS, by taking those actions, Hawaii Electric Light  
5 Company appears to be attempting to stall customers'  
6 interconnection in order to pressure the Public Utilities  
7 Commission to approve the rate reduction request; and

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9 WHEREAS, it appears that Hawaii Electric Light Company is  
10 engaging in a pressure tactic by refusing to approve new solar  
11 energy connection permits in neighborhoods with high solar  
12 energy production until the Public Utilities Commission approves  
13 the request to reduce the rate that a utility must pay to  
14 customers for excess energy fed by solar systems into the  
15 electricity grid; and

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17 WHEREAS, knowledgeable observers have noted that those  
18 actions smack of the abuse of monopoly power and an attempt by a  
19 regulated public utility to deny service to customers in order  
20 to force policy changes that benefit the utility; now,  
21 therefore,

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23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
24 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
25 Session of 2015, the Senate concurring, that the Public  
26 Utilities Commission is urged to fulfill its duty to act in the  
27 public interest regarding solar energy interconnection; and

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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission  
30 is urged to not be influenced or coerced by pressure from any  
31 utility; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission  
34 is urged to decide a utility's rate reduction request strictly  
35 on the merits of the request and the duty to ensure that  
36 regulated companies efficiently and safely provide their  
37 customers with adequate and reliable services at just and  
38 reasonable rates, while providing regulated companies with a  
39 fair opportunity to earn a reasonable rate of return; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
42 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Chair

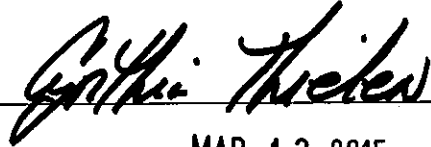


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1 and each member of the Public Utilities Commission, and the  
2 Chair and each member of the Board of Directors of Hawaiian  
3 Electric Industries.

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OFFERED BY:



MAR 13 2015

