HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO EXPAND ACCESS TO COMMUNITY-BASED RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ATTRACT COMMUNITY-BASED RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPERS BY EXPANDING THE COMMUNITY-BASED RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM, REMOVING OR INCREASING CAPS ON CAPACITY, AND ENSURING THAT THE PROGRAM ACCOMMODATES A VARIETY OF PROJECTS, MODELS, AND SIZES.

WHEREAS, Act 100, Session Laws of Hawaii 2015 (Act 100), directed the Public Utilities Commission to establish a Community-Based Renewable Energy (CBRE) tariff to provide the benefits of renewable energy to residential and commercial customers who do not have access to onsite renewable energy generation, including many renters and apartment dwellers; and

WHEREAS, subscribers are residential or commercial electric customers who participate, by lease or purchase, in community solar projects and get monthly bill credits to offset their electricity use; and

WHEREAS, electric customers who want to participate in the CBRE program contract directly with subscriber organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Phase One of the CBRE program was opened to applicants in 2018 and was capped at a capacity of eight megawatts statewide; the cap for Phase Two was set by the Public Utilities Commission at sixty-four megawatts; and

WHEREAS, the limited eight megawatt capacity of Phase One has been insufficient to attract developers who are experienced and successful at deploying these projects in other jurisdictions, thereby limiting the possibility for success of the new CBRE program in Hawaii; and
WHEREAS, the second phase would benefit from additional investors to achieve goals for increasing program capacity in terms of energy production and customer engagement; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, the Senate concurring, that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to expand access to community-based renewable energy and attract community-based renewable energy developers by expanding the Community-Based Renewable Energy program, removing or increasing caps on capacity, and ensuring that the program accommodates a variety of projects, models, and sizes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to consider the original intent of Act 100 - that the CBRE program be designed in an open and accessible process; accommodate a variety of CBRE projects, models, and sizes; and seek to increase access for residents and businesses who are unable to participate directly in renewable energy generation by dramatically expanding the market for eligible renewable energy resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to remove or substantially increase CBRE program capacity beyond the seventy-two megawatts currently envisioned for Phases 1 and 2 combined and consider creating a process for periodically re-evaluating this cap to allow for adjustments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to consider providing incentives, such as credit rate "adders", for serving hard-to-reach customer segments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to more fully realize Act 100's goal for a program that standardizes and streamlines the related interconnection processes and consider ways to encourage expediting interconnection for CBRE projects and restrict the amount of interconnection costs that can be imposed on CBRE projects; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hawaiian Electric, Maui Electric, and Hawaii Electric Light are urged to expand the applicant pool to include additional investors for Phase two of the CBRE program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chief Energy Officer of the Hawaii State Energy Office, Chair of the Public Utilities Commission, and President and Chief Executive Officer of Hawaiian Electric Company.