SENATE RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL TO CONDUCT AN ELECTRICAL ASSESSMENT OF ITS FACILITIES AND REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Hawaii's electricity consumers continue to endure the highest electricity rates in the country; and

WHEREAS, the highest costs for this essential utility impose substantial burdens on the State's households, businesses, and schools; and

WHEREAS, the high cost of electricity has severely burdened the operations of the Department of Education in properly supplying classrooms with necessary electricity needs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education's energy requirements and electricity bills are expected to increase as a result of, among other things, volatile oil prices and the need to install heat abatement and air conditioning equipment in some schools to preserve and promote the health and safety of students and teachers, and to foster a better and more comfortable and productive learning environment in public schools; and

WHEREAS, given the current circumstances, it is in the public's best interest to assist the Department of Education in achieving immediate, tangible, and sustainable electricity cost relief through the generation of renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, renewable energy will enable the Department of Education to provide more cooling for schools by managing its energy costs, which would be more sustainable than any temporary rate reduction due to the volatility of oil prices and resulting increased electricity rates; and

WHEREAS, the State has established an important policy goal of achieving a one hundred percent renewable energy portfolio standard by 2045, pursuant to Act 97, Session Laws of Hawaii 2015; and
WHEREAS, investments in renewable energy resources must be made by the Department of Education to help the State achieve its aggressive clean energy goals and to provide electricity for its own use in public schools; and

WHEREAS, an electrical assessment will provide an important baseline that will allow the State to accurately determine whether efforts to convert to renewable energy sources are successful; and

WHEREAS, it is consistent with state policy to facilitate an increase in the use of renewable energy by the Department of Education by providing financial relief for the installation and use of renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, due to the projected high cost of electricity in public schools to keep classrooms comfortable for students and teachers throughout the State being a key point for the Legislature; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that the Department of Education is encouraged to require each public school to conduct an electrical assessment of its facilities to gather an understanding of its current usage and most essential needs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education and Chairperson of the Board of Education.

OFFERED BY: [Signature]