

Testimony before  
The Transportation and Planning Committee  
On Council Bill 4, Proposed CD 1 (2009)

March 5, 2009

By  
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Chair Okino and Members of the Committee:

Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc. supports the intent of the proposed CD 1 to Bill 4, but respectfully opposes it as it would negatively impact Hawaiian Electric's daily and emergency operations, and the safety of the public and our work crews. We are therefore requesting an amendment that would exempt electric utility vehicle operators from the requirements of the proposed CD 1.

Hawaiian Electric's daily work requires periodic communication with our employees in the field using push to talk mobile devices. Banning the use of this communication method will limit Hawaiian Electric's ability to communicate with field personnel. Safety issues may also arise from this ban. Failure by our field personnel to hear what is being communicated may result in decision errors that can threaten the safety of the public and Hawaiian Electric personnel.

In addition, during emergency situations or when the power is out, Hawaiian Electric will need to direct its field personnel by the most effective communication method available. Unlike cell phone sites that fail when the power is lost, Hawaiian Electric's mobile communication system has performed time after time during widespread electrical problems. Hawaiian Electric's mobile radio communication system is an effective and reliable method for communicating work instructions to field personnel. Without this form of communication, directing our workforce would be very difficult and the result would be longer outage times.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the committee to exempt electric utility vehicle operators from this bill by adopting the following amendments (suggested amendments in **bold**):

- c) Police officers and emergency service personnel (including fire fighters, emergency medical service technicians and civil defense workers) shall be exempt from the provisions of subsection (a) while in the performance and scope of their official duties; and taxi drivers, **and** commercial vehicle operators, **and electric utility vehicle operators** shall be exempt from the provisions of subsection (a) while in the performance and scope of their work duties.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.