



# CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT

Public Utility News You Can Use

Issue 24 | April 2017



## Executive Director's Message

By Dean Nishina

Spring has arrived and our office is busy with important dockets as well as monitoring key bills in the legislature regarding energy and public utilities. There are a number of rate case applications before the Public Utilities Commission. The Hawaii Water Service Company, Inc.'s Pukalani Wastewater Division rate increase is highlighted in this issue.

Another docket being reviewed is Hawaiian Electric Company's 46kV Ala Wai Canal Project. Read more about it on page 2. Our office will ensure that the public's interest is thoroughly considered in this matter.

DCA continues to work hard to advocate for Hawaii consumers, especially in rate cases. We encourage public testimony on any issue that is important to you regarding regulated public utilities and transportation companies. Feel free to contact our office with any questions on or concerns with a docket.

### Quick Quiz:



True or False?  
Compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs use less electricity than traditional incandescent bulbs.

Find the answer on Page 4.



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The DCA table at the National Consumer Protection Week Fair held at the King Kalakaua building offered handouts, brochures and copies of its newsletter to the general public.

### In This Issue

- What Is Cramming?
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## What is Cramming?

**Cramming** is an industry term for a situation where a company may charge for telecommunications or information services that were not intentionally ordered by the consumer.

Crammers often rely on confusing telephone bills to trick consumers into paying for services they did not authorize or receive, or that cost more than the consumer was led to believe.

Cramming comes in many forms. Charges, described below, may be legitimate but if unauthorized, it is cramming.

- Service charges explained in general terms such as “service fee,” “other fees,” and “membership.”
- Monthly charges without clear explanation such as “monthly fee” or “premium monthly usage fee.”
- Specific services or products that may not have been authorized like ringtones, wall paper or “premium” text messages.

To take precautions against cramming, you should review your monthly phone bill carefully. If there are any charges that do not appear familiar, you should call the provider that is charging you for the services.



Article source: Federal Communications Commission



Area of underground line construction project. Google Maps image.

## HECO Plans Ala Wai Canal 46kV Underground Line Construction

Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc. (HECO) has requested approvals for a proposed Ala Wai Canal 46 kilovolt underground line construction project with an estimated cost of \$13.9 million.

HECO currently has existing 46kV lines submerged in the Ala Wai Canal near its Waikiki substation. The lines can interfere with the Department of Land and Natural Resources’ (DLNR) maintenance dredging of the canal due to the depth of the lines (currently as shallow as 8.5 feet below the mean sea level).

HECO asserts that DLNR has asked HECO to move the cables in anticipation of the next canal dredging planned in June 2018. As such, HECO has requested the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to issue its decision and order on or before September 1, 2017.

In January, HECO hosted two public meetings for area residents and businesses to inform them of its construction plans and the possible effects. A public hearing by the PUC is set for April 4. Details of the hearing notice can be found on the PUC Document Management System by searching for the docket number.

The Consumer Advocate (CA) will participate in the proceeding and will state its position upon completion of its investigation. According to the docket’s procedural schedule, the CA’s Statement of Position will be due on or before June 30, 2017.

*Docket No. 2016-0416*

***PUC Docket Numbers are included in these articles for further, in depth reading. PUC public filings are accessible online via the PUC’s Document Management System (DMS). Visit: <http://dms.puc.hawaii.gov/dms>***

## Hawaii Water Service Company, Inc. Seeks Rate Increase For Its Pukalani Wastewater Division

Hawaii Water Service Company, Inc. (HWSC) has filed with the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission (PUC) an application seeking rate increases and approval of revisions to its tariff for the company's Pukalani Wastewater Division.



Wastewater is treated at the Pukalani plant.

HWSC requests commission approval of a net increase of 113.5 percent for the 2017 Test Year. If the application is approved, the proposed revenue increase will provide HWSC with a 7.75 percent rate of return.

The Consumer Advocate intends to participate in the instant proceeding and will provide its position on HWSC's requested relief upon the completion of its investigation.

HWSC is a public utility providing wastewater collection and treatment services. Its Pukalani service territory includes approximately 880 residential and commercial customers on the lower slopes of Haleakala.

*Docket No. 2015-0236*

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## KIUC Seeks PPA Approval

In a recent application, Kauai Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) requests the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to approve the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) between KIUC and AES Lawai Solar, LLC. The PPA includes a solar generating and battery energy storage system (BESS) facility.

AES plans to construct a solar photovoltaic system and a 100 MWh BESS in the first contract year. AES will build, operate, maintain and repair the PV and battery facility.

If approved, the facility will be able to deliver energy to the system at night. The proposed price for the delivered energy is 11.1 cents per kWh.

KIUC states the renewable energy to be purchased will assist in achieving the State of Hawaii's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and estimates that the facility will contribute approximately 10.92 percent to KIUC's 2019 RPS. Also, the PPA will further the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative.

The Consumer Advocate will be issuing information requests and will state its position upon completion of its investigation.

*Docket No. 2017-0018*

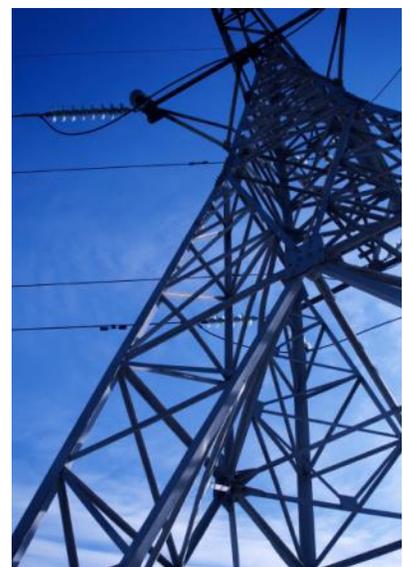
## PUC Denies HECO-AES Power Purchase Agreement

In a Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Decision and Order, the PUC denied Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.'s (HECO) request to amend its power purchase agreement (PPA) with AES, Hawaii Inc. (AES).

In its application, HECO requested that the PUC approve an amendment to an existing PPA between HECO and AES. The amendment would have allowed AES to provide HECO an additional 9 megawatts (MW) of capacity on top of the 180 MW that AES currently provides.

The Consumer Advocate recommended the PUC not approve the amendment citing concerns with the price, purported reliability benefits, and inconsistency with Hawaii's renewable portfolio standards (RPS).

*Docket No. 2016-0007*



# LIHEAP Energy Credit Program Application Period Approaches

The application period for an energy credit from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is from June 1 through June 30, 2017. To apply, go to [hcapweb.org/liheap](http://hcapweb.org/liheap) or in-person by visiting a community action agency. For more information and to view a full list of agency addresses and phone numbers, visit [humanservices.hawaii.gov](http://humanservices.hawaii.gov).

LIHEAP will assist with payments toward a household's utility bill (electric or gas). Applicants may apply for one of the following two types of credit once per year:

- 1) Energy Credit (EC) - A program that provides eligible households who are not in crisis with a one-time payment.
- 2) Emergency Crisis Intervention (ECI) - A program that assists with a one-time payment of up to \$350 to restore or prevent termination of power to the residence whose electricity or gas has been shut off within 60 days or is about to be terminated within 7 days.

LIHEAP provides needy households with heating and/or cooling assistance. It is a federal program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## Upcoming Dates of Interest

- **April 4: Public Hearing for HECO's Ala Wai Canal 46kV Project**  
Held at Ala Wai Elementary School at 6 p.m. *Docket No. 2016-0416*
- **April 5: Financial Literacy Fair** held at Tamarind Park in downtown Honolulu from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. DCA will have a table.
- **April 14: Good Friday** (State holiday, our office will be closed).



- **April 22: Earth Day** Celebrate by doing something "green" like riding a bike instead of driving a car.



Quick Quiz Answer: True

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### Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

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### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

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