

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

In the Matter of the Application of)
)
 HAWAII ELECTRIC LIGHT COMPANY, INC.)
)
 For Approval to Commit Funds in)
 Excess of \$500,000 for Item H0000650,)
 Kukio 69 kV Underground Conversion.)
 _____)

DOCKET NO. 02-0115

DIV. OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY
DEPT. OF COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE OF HAWAII

2002 JUN 27 P 3:44

RECEIVED

INTERIM DECISION AND ORDER NO. 19433

Filed June 27, 2002
At 9:30 o'clock A .M.

Karen Higashi
Chief Clerk of the Commission

ATTEST: A True Copy
KAREN HIGASHI
Chief Clerk, Public Utilities
Commission, State of Hawaii.

K. Higashi

Standards for Electric Utility Service in the State of Hawaii and HRS §§ 269-27.5 and 269-27.6.¹

HELCO served copies of the application on the Division of Consumer Advocacy, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (Consumer Advocate).

In accordance with HRS § 269-27.5, a public hearing was held on June 12, 2002, at the Kona International Airport, Administrative Training Room, Module 2.²

On June 13, 2002, the Consumer Advocate submitted written information requests to HELCO to facilitate its review of the instant application.

II.

A.

The proposed project involves the temporary overhead-to-overhead relocation and permanent conversion to underground of approximately 0.6 mile of HELCO's existing Poopoomino-Keahole 9100 69 kV overhead transmission line. A golf course is currently being built under a section of the existing 69 kV overhead transmission line, and the developer, WB Kukio Resorts, LLC (Developer) has requested, and will pay

¹General Order No. 7 states, in relevant part, that "[p]roposed capital expenditures . . . in excess of \$500,000 . . . shall be submitted to the Commission for review at least 60 days prior to the commencement of construction or commitment for expenditure[.]"

²HELCO and the Consumer Advocate appeared at the public hearing and submitted their written testimonies. No other persons appeared. A brief written statement in support of HELCO's application was, however, received by the commission on June 6, 2002, from ACM Consultants, Inc.

for, during construction of the golf course, the temporary aboveground relocation and subsequent permanent conversion to underground of HELCO's existing 69 kV overhead transmission line.

The proposed project will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 of the proposed project is a temporary 69 kV overhead to overhead relocation around the perimeter of the golf course. Phase 2 will convert the temporary aboveground line to underground. The underground line will follow generally along the same route as the temporary overhead line.

The temporary overhead line will involve the installation of approximately 21 70-foot wood poles, one 75-foot wood pole, one transmission disconnect switch, and approximately 6,500 circuit feet of 3W-556.5MCM AAC conductors and 1W-#3/0 AAAC static wire.³

The conversion of the overhead line to underground will require installing 6,500 feet of duct line, including four 6-inch concrete encased PVC schedule 40 ducts and seven 6-foot by 14-foot manholes; 6,500 circuit feet of cross linked polyethylene 69 kV cables; and two 75-foot steel riser poles and terminations.⁴

The Developer will grant an easement, at no cost, to HELCO for the temporary 69 kV overhead line and for the permanent 69 kV underground line.

Upon commission approval, HELCO proposes to commit funds by executing Letter Agreements with the Developer. Letter

³See HELCO's Application at 5.

⁴Id. at 6.

Agreements will be executed for both the temporary overhead relocation and the underground conversion.⁵

The Developer has requested that the underground conversion be completed by November, 2003. In order to meet this schedule, HELCO would need to relocate the temporary overhead line by June, 2002, or July, 2002, at the latest. Accordingly, we find the issuance of an interim decision and order on the temporary aboveground relocation matter to be advisable at this juncture.

B.

Upon a review of the record, the commission finds that the temporary aboveground relocation of the 69 kV line is reasonable, in the public interest, and consistent with the objectives of HRS § 269-27.6(a).⁶ Specifically, the commission

⁵The Developer has already paid \$198,698 to HELCO for the temporary relocation work. Id. at 7.

⁶In this regard, whenever a public utility applies to the commission for approval to place, construct, erect or otherwise build a new 46 kV or greater high-voltage electric transmission system, HRS § 269-27.6(a) requires the commission to determine whether the proposed system shall be placed overhead or underground. In making this determination, HRS § 269-27.6(a) requires the commission to consider certain factors:

1. Whether a benefit exists that outweighs the costs of placing the electric system underground;
2. Whether there is a governmental public policy requiring the electric transmission system to be placed, constructed, erected, or built underground, and the governmental agency establishing the policy commits funds for the additional costs of undergrounding;
3. Whether any governmental agency or other parties are willing to pay for the additional costs of undergrounding;

is not aware of any benefit that outweighs the costs of temporarily undergrounding the existing line. HELCO states that it does not have the alternative of temporarily relocating the line underground pending design and construction of the permanent underground line segment; its only alternative would be to delay the relocation of the line until the underground segment of the line was complete, which would significantly delay the proposed project.⁷ The commission is also not aware of any government policy requiring either the temporary undergrounding, or the committal of funds for the costs of temporarily undergrounding the line. Additionally, no governmental agency or other party has indicated a willingness to pay for the temporary undergrounding.

Lastly, the Consumer Advocate has orally represented that it does not object to approval of the temporary aboveground relocation of the 69 kV line, and there appears to be no other relevant factors to consider. Accordingly, the commission concludes that the temporary aboveground relocation of the 69 kV line should be approved and HELCO should be authorized to commit funds needed to construct and complete such line on an interim basis. The commission will consider the remainder of HELCO's requests in the instant application in a separate, final decision and order.

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4. The recommendation of the Consumer Advocate; and
 5. Any other relevant factors.

⁷Id. at p. 10.

III.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

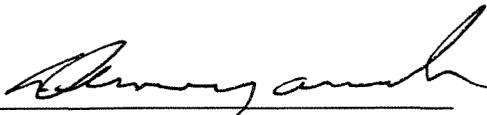
1. HELCO's request for expedited approval to temporarily relocate the 69 kV transmission line above the surface of the ground is granted.

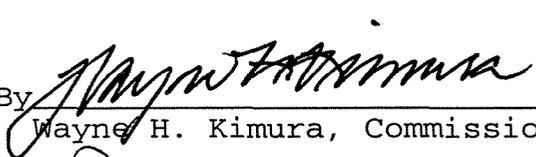
2. HELCO is authorized, on an interim basis, to commit funds needed to construct and complete the temporary overhead 69 kV transmission line, which constitutes a portion of the proposed project.

3. This interim decision and order shall be subject to the provisions of the final decision and order that will be issued in this docket.

DONE at Honolulu, Hawaii this 27th day of June, 2002.

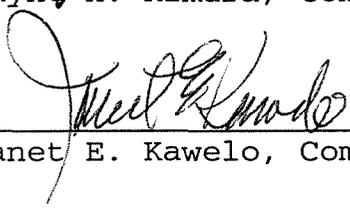
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

By 
Dennis R. Yamada, Chairman

By 
Wayne H. Kimura, Commissioner

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Benedyne S. Stone
Commission Counsel

By 
Janet E. Kawelo, Commissioner

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

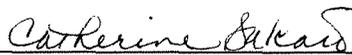
I hereby certify that I have this date served a copy of the foregoing Interim Decision and Order No. 19433 upon the following parties, by causing a copy hereof to be mailed, postage prepaid, and properly addressed to each such party.

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Catherine Sakato

DATED: June 27, 2002