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Carpenters Union Spreads Misinformation and Tries To Cut Out Other Trade Unions

HONOLULU, April 3, 2025- In a smear campaign reeking of mainland politics and misinformation, the Carpenters Union stoops to an all-time low, but familiar tactic to secure an exclusive labor agreement with Hawaiian Electric Company, that would exclude other construction trades unions from the work they perform.

“Unfortunately, this has become the Carpenters M.O.” said Gino Soquena, Executive Director of the Hawaii Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO (HBCTC). “The agreement, presented to HECO as more of an ultimatum, would have given the Carpenters Union an unprecedented twenty-year exclusive agreement with the electric utility,” Soquena continued. “Although we strongly support the right to organize, the part that is extremely disturbing is that the Carpenters are known for poaching other trade unions work, and this would allow them to do that.”

The Carpenters Union has been testifying in opposition to Senate Bill 897 which is a comprehensive measure intended to stabilize the electric utility, mitigate future catastrophic wildfires, and minimize cost impacts to ratepayers. The Carpenters have mischaracterized the legislation as a ‘Bailout’.

“This bill is far from a bailout,” stated Damien Kim, President of the HBCTC, “It’s a forward-thinking bill in response to an unforeseen tragic event, designed to minimize future impacts to the community and ratepayers by giving the utility the tools to shore itself up,” Kim added. “The Carpenters shouldn’t be misleading the public and opposing a bill that is intended to help.”

“The Carpenters are on the wrong side of this one”, said Kim, “The HBCTC supports our sister union IBEW1260 and HECO in their efforts to do the right thing and we hope that the Carpenters eventually do the same.”

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The Hawaii Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO, comprised of eighteen (18) local construction trades unions amounting to over 30,000 members statewide, was chartered by North America’s Building Trades Unions in 1957, and is the sole arbiter of construction trades union matters in Hawaii.