

Hawaii Energy Office restructures its internal branches

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The Hawaii Energy Office is restructuring its internal branches to more effectively align with its strategic approach, which includes identifying high-impact strategies to achieve the state's clean-energy goals, the head of the office told PBN.

Changes include creating the new Energy Systems and Transportation branch and changing the Innovation, Policy and Planning branch to the Clean Energy Solutions branch. Other branches are Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Outreach and Staff Support.

[Mark Glick](#), administrator for the Energy Office, which is part of the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, said the changes are a crucial step toward getting the state closer to its renewable-energy goal of 70 percent clean energy by 2030 — 40 percent from renewables and 30 percent from efficiency measures.

Glick and other stakeholders have said that the state could surpass that mark.

"We stepped [up our efforts] after dealing with some first-priority issues," he said. "We created a new innovations branch in 2012, created the GEMS program, and are heavily involved in efforts to spread entrepreneurship."

The GEMS program is a financing initiative designed to make clean energy more affordable and accessible for Hawaii consumers.

Another focus is helping the state's transportation sector use less oil, one of the main parts of the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative.

Glick also noted that bringing in the expertise to help the office solve more technical issues is part of the restructuring.

Currently, the office has 33 employees, down from 46 when Glick took over in 2011. It is looking to hire three more employees.

"We plan to have these positions filled in the coming months," he said. "When I came in, it was quite depleted, so we had all those positions, but I chose to not fill them all."

The office's annual budget is \$5.3 million, and Glick said he won't be asking the Legislature for more funding.

Duane Shimogawa covers energy, real estate and economic development for Pacific Business News.