



The Current Newsletter

October 2023



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Hawai'i State Energy Office Makes Congressional Appearance

Aloha kākou,

On September 28, I testified at a hearing of the House Energy and Commerce Committee convened by Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Chair Morgan Griffith (R-VA) along with Energy, Climate, and Grid Security

Subcommittee Chair Jeff Duncan (R-SC). The Committee had launched an investigation into the Maui wildfires of August 8 with the stated purpose to come to a complete understanding of how this disaster started to ensure Hawai'i and other states are prepared to prevent and stop other deadly wildfires. I was also asked to answer a list of questions posed by the Committee in a letter sent in advance of the hearing.

As noted in my response to the Committee's letter and in my testimony, the Hawai'i State Energy Office appreciates the thorough exploration of the causes and effects of the tragic events, and we share the nation's resolve to stand with the people of Lāhainā in their quest to heal, grieve, and recover. I also took the opportunity to inform the Committee that a driving force for Hawai'i's aggressive pursuit of energy self-sufficiency is due to our deep concern over oil price volatility, which is extremely detrimental to our economy and cost of living. In touting the island of Kaua'i's achievement of 60% renewable energy, I mentioned that Kaua'i now has the lowest average electricity rates in the state, demonstrating that renewables are the low-cost energy solution while achieving other policy objectives.

Hawai'i now understands there is a new normal with wildfires, a long-time threat, since Hurricane Lane in August of 2018 and the California wildfires. With clear recognition that Hawai'i's wet and dry periods are more pronounced, Hawai'i's wildfire risk is now on par with threats posed by hurricanes, floods and earthquakes, and tsunamis under our "all-hazards" approach to resilience.

Despite the Energy Office's lack of authority for oversight or enforcement of the utilities or the private sector on energy matters, several ways the Energy Office exerts its energy policy and

resilience planning role is through participation in regulatory proceedings and serving as Emergency Support Function #12 (energy) within FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Framework. The Energy Office served on the Resilience Working Group from 2019 through 2021 under Hawaiian Electric's Integrated Grid Planning process with oversight by the Hawai'i PUC. The Working group considered hurricanes; earthquakes and tsunamis; volcanos; wildfires; and physical and cyber-attacks as the greatest threats to grid resilience and recommended a set of resilience measures.

Among the measures recommended by the Resilience Working Group are:

- Plans for enhanced vegetation management, particularly in critical grid areas.
- Continue to harden or reinforce critical transmission circuits and upgrade structures.
- Continue planning for expanding water-resistant, underground cables.
- Establish priority circuits with enhanced restoration capabilities and greater hardening.
- Consider adopting advanced technologies in a more distributed resource approach, including microgrids for emergency and backup operations.
- Develop wildfire mitigation strategies for a worst-case wildfire event at Mā'alaea, a location just 16 miles south of Lāhainā.

The Working Group emphasized that infrastructure owners and operators must work together in close partnerships to coordinate disaster planning and recovery with shared responsibilities between the power companies, key customers, and the government. The final consolidated Integrated Grid Plan Report was submitted to the Hawai'i PUC by Hawaiian Electric on May 12 of this year and is currently under review by the PUC.

The Energy Office is now completing the O‘ahu Energy System and Critical Infrastructure Vulnerability and Resiliency Assessment, a FEMA-funded effort. This assessment of O‘ahu's major energy supply, distribution, and demand networks, and the State’s critical infrastructure risks covers electricity, liquid, and gas energy infrastructure. Once completed, the Energy Office plans to follow up, pending FEMA approval, with a second phase of analysis for Kaua‘i, Maui, and Hawai‘i counties.

Making Hawai‘i's grid more resilient will involve short-term and long-term actions requiring a shared commitment between the private and public sectors and providing resources to safeguard our essential energy infrastructure. I look forward to working with all our stakeholders to ensure the safety, reliability, resiliency, and affordability of the State’s energy grid in the face of these emerging threats.

With Aloha,



HSEO has updated its website to include Congressional testimony and correspondence related to the Maui fires. [Follow this link to read more.](#)



U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm toured Maui with Governor and HSEO in September. She reaffirmed the Biden Administration's full support for the recovery effort.



Decarbonization Strategy and Stakeholder Recap, Update, and Next Steps

On Tuesday, September 12, 2023, HSEO hosted a stakeholder workshop in collaboration with the consulting firm E3. The event provided a high-level overview of the ongoing decarbonization analysis approach to evaluating emission reduction pathways across all sectors of the economy.

The webinar included:

- An overview of HSEO's ACT 238 Decarbonization Study,

- A description of the decarbonization analysis approach and study outcomes,
- Gathering of feedback on the analysis approach, including reference and mitigation scenarios,
- Opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions regarding the study approach and outcome.

The workshop's recording and presentation materials are on [HSEO's Decarbonization Page](#) under "Presentations."

Feedback is greatly appreciated for inclusion in the Report! We encourage everyone to complete the short [feedback survey](#)!

To stay engaged and participate in future stakeholder events and workshops, please get in touch with HSEO's Decarbonization Program Manager, Monique Schafer, at monique.m.schafer@hawaii.gov.



Good Jobs Hawai'i is Looking to Build a Skilled Trade Workforce in Clean Energy

Good Jobs Hawai'i, a \$35 million workforce development initiative, aims to enhance the state's career pathways by offering local residents

complimentary skills training and job placement assistance for high-demand, well-paying positions. It operates as a coalition led by the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges comprising educators, businesses, and community partners, collectively dedicated to assisting Hawai'i's residents in securing high-quality jobs and careers. Launched in January 2023, this initiative also ensures employers access to a skilled local workforce catering to four of Hawai'i's major industries: healthcare, information technology, clean energy and skilled trades, and creative media.

As one of 32 workforce initiatives awarded funding nationally through the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA), Good Jobs Hawai'i focuses on innovative approaches to transform Hawai'i's workforce development system and support residents.

As part of Good Jobs Hawai'i, the Hawai'i State Energy Office, in partnership with the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges, Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce, and SMS Research, established a new Hawai'i Clean Energy Sector Partnership in May 2023. This Sector Partnership is an industry-led group of employers, educators, and community organizations that strives to identify in-demand entry-level positions and develop career pathways for these positions, identify desired skills and training resources, provide on-the-job training, and support overall employment and career advancement.

The first full Sector Partnership meeting will be held virtually on October 11, 2023, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. (HST). If you'd like to attend or have questions, please contact HSEO's Renewable Energy Program Manager, Cameron Black, at cameron.b.black@hawaii.gov.



Kiana Otsuka, active transportation specialist, HSEO, engaged participants in activities to understand perceived barriers to e-bikes at the Hawai'i Commute Challenge Celebration Event.

Commute Challenge Encourages Clean Multimodal Options

HSEO joined the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, Blue Planet Foundation and other organizations to recognize everyone who took part in this year's [Commute Challenge](#). The month-long event challenged participants to explore the diverse transportation alternatives available in Hawai'i, such as walking, biking, carpooling, and utilizing public transportation like buses and the Skyline.

During the wrap-up event on September 9, HSEO shared information about the State's electric bike and electric moped rebate and asked participants what barriers exist to owning and operating an e-bike. By better understanding public perceptions, HSEO staff work to address real and perceived barriers to transportation alternatives.

Find us next at the WE are Kalihi Event on October 7th!

Talk story with HSEO at Ka'ewai Elementary School Cafeteria from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. after the group walk. Learn more about whether you qualify for the State's electric bike and electric moped rebate, and share what barriers exist to owning and operating an e-bike.

[Register for the event here!](#)

Interested in the Hawai'i Electric Bike and Moped Rebate Program?

Hawai'i offers rebates of up to \$500 or 20% off the retail price for eligible newly purchased electric bicycles and electric mopeds. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and prove one of the following:

- Participation in a low-income assistance program such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Section 8;
- Do not own a motor vehicle with four or more wheels;
- Current enrollment in a school, college, or university.

E-bikes and e-mopeds are a great low-emissions way to get around, especially to make short trips, and will play an important role in the state's decarbonization efforts.

[More information, including the application, can be found here!](#)



*Pictured L-R, **Joseph Anastacio**, financial systems analyst, Palau Public Utilities Corporation; **Eden Ridep Uchel**, MPH, director, Palau Energy and Water Administration; **Mark B. Glick**, chief energy officer, HSEO; **Stephen C. Walls**, deputy chief energy officer, HSEO*

HSEO Engages with Pacific Region Energy Colleagues

Hawai'i's progress in clean energy continues to garner global recognition, especially among our "neighbors" in the Pacific region. In September, HSEO was pleased to host Palau (*pictured above*) and Rapa Nui energy colleagues to discuss common goals in renewable energy development, energy assurance and reliability, and workforce development. In addition, CEO Mark B. Glick presented at a US Department of Energy forum in Alaska on advancements in technology for isolated energy grid systems.

If you are interested in having HSEO staff speak at an upcoming event or meet visiting energy leaders, please contact us at dbedt.energyoffice@hawaii.gov.

The Energy Data Portal is Live!

New updates to the Energy Data Portal!

Check out our one-stop shop for a diverse portfolio of energy-related datasets that summarize key energy trends, facts, and figures spanning the topics of renewable energy, energy efficiency, fossil fuel reliance, and transportation!

[Visit the HSEO Energy Data Portal](#)

HAWAI'I GREEN BUSINESS FORUM



Coming Soon to a Community Near You!

Learn from recent Hawai'i Green Business Program awardees about how reducing energy and water usage has made a difference for the better. Hawai'i Energy and KIUC will highlight rebates, incentives, and program updates. After the presentations, join the site tour where you'll see first-hand green practices implemented by a local business.

[Click here to find the schedule for upcoming forums on Kaua'i, Hawai'i island, and O'ahu.](#)



Help Hawai'i Achieve its Energy Goals!

We have open positions for talented people who are passionate about the work we do. Help protect Hawai'i's quality of life by ensuring energy security and resilience while driving nation-leading efforts toward decarbonization and energy independence.

[Visit energy.hawaii.gov/careers today!](https://energy.hawaii.gov/careers)



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