



The Current Newsletter

November 2023



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Mark's Message

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 now a 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, 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 circuit 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 Lahaina.

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 both 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,



Hawai‘i State Energy Office and
Kaua‘i Island Utility Cooperative

Secure \$17.9M for Innovative Energy Projects!

In a groundbreaking development for Hawai'i's energy landscape, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) and Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) have secured over \$17.9 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy's Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program. These funds will be directed towards two innovative technology demonstration projects that aim to revolutionize the renewable energy sector and bolster the resilience of the island's power grid.

The two projects, undertaken in partnership with KIUC, will leverage existing power generation equipment with cutting-edge technology to expand dispatchable renewable energy and enhance the reliability of the island grid. These initiatives align with KIUC's ambitious goal of achieving 100% renewable energy within the next 10 years. The commitment and innovation exhibited by Kaua'i serve as a shining example for other islands and regions, highlighting the potential to reduce energy costs and promote environmental sustainability.

The two projects are scheduled to commence in early 2024, with an estimated completion date in mid-2025. This timeline reflects a sense of urgency and commitment to realizing Hawai'i's clean energy goals.

[Read more about the projects here!](#)



HSEO is Seeking Community and Stakeholder Feedback on our Ongoing Decarbonization Strategy!

Please complete the survey below if you would like to provide feedback on the economy-wide strategy. Responses will be recorded and published as a part of the report.

[Share your Mana‘o](#)



Cameron Black, Jobs and Outreach Branch Manager, and ***Parker Kushima***, Outreach and Community Engagement Specialist & Clean Energy Wayfinders Coordinator, taking about careers in Hawai'i's clean energy ecosystem at UH West O'ahu's Career Expo.

Update on Hawai'i's Clean Energy Workforce

Our recent Clean Energy Sector Partnership (CESP) meeting on October 11 marked another big step in Hawai'i's journey toward a cleaner, sustainable future. The meeting celebrated the launch of the CESP, which seeks to provide a bright local workforce to meet Hawai'i's growing demand for clean energy and skilled trades jobs. This collaboration brings together industry leaders, educators, and community partners to enhance coordination, drive workforce development, and other essential sector initiatives. CESP's mission is to help ensure there is a qualified local candidate for every clean energy job in Hawai'i.

A strong, local clean energy workforce also requires investment in and support for our keiki. As part of the CESP, HSEO aims to help establish a robust keiki-to-career pathway, bringing together partners across K-12 education, community colleges and universities, state and county government, and the energy industry. HSEO serves on the Energy Pathway Advisory Council and Energy Pilot Project Team within the Hawai'i Department of Education's (HIDOE) Career and Technical Education program (CTE). The Jobs and Outreach Branch, including the Clean Energy Wayfinders, have begun connecting with schools across the state to help develop the Energy Pathway curriculum, share accessible energy information, and connect teachers and students to employers and opportunities in Hawai'i's clean energy ecosystem. Most recently, HSEO staff presented at Campbell High School's Energy Foundations class and attended a career expo at UH West O'ahu to share exciting opportunities for energy careers with Hawai'i's keiki.

[Check out HSEO's new Workforce Development page!](#)



Renew Rebuild Hawaii Event Recap

Renew Rebuild Hawaii recently hosted an event titled "Net Zero in 2046 - How do we get there from here?" The event, which took place on October 26, 2023, featured the participation of the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO). Its primary objective was to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in Hawai'i's journey toward achieving its ambitious goal of using 100% clean energy by 2045. This endeavor is particularly significant given the evolving energy landscapes and the increasing prominence of electric vehicles (EVs).

Stephen Walls, Deputy Director of HSEO, delivered a compelling presentation during the event. He discussed how state energy planners are reevaluating their perspectives and calculations to devise innovative pathways for clean energy development leading up to 2045.

HSEO and Hawaiian Electric have conducted independent assessments concerning the future of energy usage in Hawai'i. These assessments address a common issue: the outdated assumptions made in 2008 regarding renewable energy requirements for attaining the state's clean fuel goals by 2045. Recognizing this discrepancy, both entities have embarked on recalculations to ensure accurate projections align with current circumstances.

[Watch the recording and learn more about Renew Rebuild Hawaii](#)



Donna Mau's employees (current and retired) joined HSEO staff and leadership to help her retire in style.

Farewell, Donna!

It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to a cherished member of the Hawai'i State Energy Office team. Donna Mau, Managing Director - Operations, has been an invaluable part of our journey toward a cleaner and more sustainable Hawai'i, and is embarking on a new adventure.

Donna has been with HSEO for more than 12 years and wrapped up more than 30 years in public service at the end of October. Donna is the

reigning DBEDT Manager of the Year and plans to travel the world when not volunteering to help seriously ill children live their dreams through the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

We will miss you, Donna!

Welcoming Our Newest Members at HSEO

We are delighted to introduce the newest members of the Hawai'i State Energy Office team. As we continue to grow and evolve, our team expands to better serve our mission and our commitment to achieve 100 percent clean energy by the year 2045. These talented individuals bring a wealth of experience, passion, and fresh perspectives.

- **Amy Chang** - Energy Program Specialist
- **Alana Wilson** - Outreach and Community Engagement Specialist
- **Brian DeSanti** - Renewable Energy Specialist - Ocean
- **Cameron Weiner** - National Renewable Energy Laboratory Researcher
- **Catherina Pratt** - Fiscal Manager
- **Luke Miller** - Energy Economics Specialist
- **Māhealani Kaonohi** - Fiscal Assistant
- **Munashe Chando** - Renewable Energy Analyst
- **Scott Marshall** - Energy Analytics Specialist

These individuals come to HSEO with a deep commitment to clean energy and a shared vision for a more sustainable future for Hawai'i.

[Take a look at our full team and staff!](#)



Chris Yunker, Managing Director - Reliability, Clean Transportation, and Analytics, speaks to stakeholders attending the O'ahu Tourism Transportation Electrification Workshop at the State Capitol on October 30, 2023.

Powering O'ahu's Sustainable Tourism Through EV Charging Infrastructure

O'ahu's tourism industry is poised to contribute to the state's decarbonization goals – it just needs the infrastructure needed to keep up with demand.

Public and private sector stakeholders gathered recently to discuss the need for convenient reliable electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The Hawai'i State Energy Office was among several organizations that helped sponsor the workshop to raise awareness and enable collaboration to expand access to charging infrastructure.

Managing Director of Resilience, Clean Transportation, and Analytics, Chris Yunker, spoke to HSEO's role in supporting policies that require the state to lead by example including, for example, requiring state employees to rent EVs on

business travel where available. HSEO is also working with federal, state, and industry partners to leverage programs and resources to prioritize the holistic deployment of infrastructure statewide.

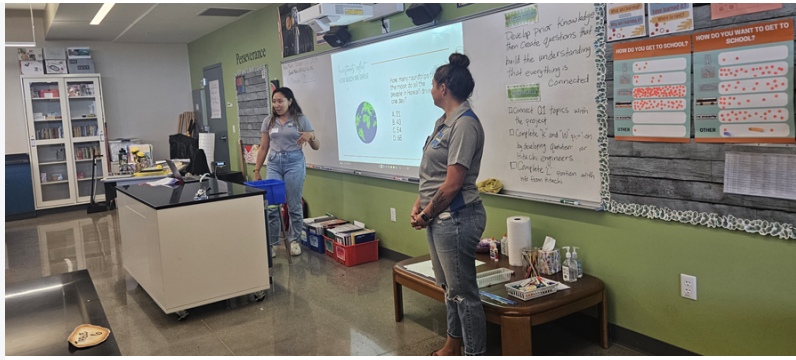
Enabling cleaner ground transportation on O‘ahu also includes making it easier for visitors to use public transportation, walk, and access other alternatives that reduce the number of vehicles on our roads.



Trinity Gilliam, Clean and Affordable Transportation Choices Specialist, and Nickie Shintani, Clean Energy Wayfinder - O‘ahu, of HSEO, tabling at WE Are Kalihi event.

Electric Bike and Electric Moped Rebate Outreach and Engagement

The Hawai‘i State Energy Office collaborated with the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation to do outreach and engagement on the Electric Bike and Electric Moped rebate on October 7th at the WE Are Kalihi event, at Ka‘ewai Elementary School Cafeteria. Informational flyers about the rebate were distributed among parents, participating organizations, and staff members present at the venue.



Kiana Otsuka, Active Transportation Specialist, HSEO, and Samantha Lara, Transportation Planner, Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, presented on sustainable transportation choices at Honouliuli Middle School.

Sustainable Transportation Choices Presentation at Honouliuli Middle School

The HSEO joined the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization to present on sustainable transportation choices to 140 students at Honouliuli Middle School to inspire their engineering and transportation solutions project. After presenting, both organizations served as judges for the school's engineering fair.

Electric Bike and Electric Moped Rebate Now Available

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation has launched the Hawai'i Electric Bike and Electric Moped Rebate, which makes rebates of up to \$500 or 20% of the retail price available for eligible purchases of newly purchased electric bicycles and electric mopeds. Applicant must be 18 years of age or older, 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!](#)



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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Hawai'i State Energy Office
235 S. Beretania St. Fifth Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

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