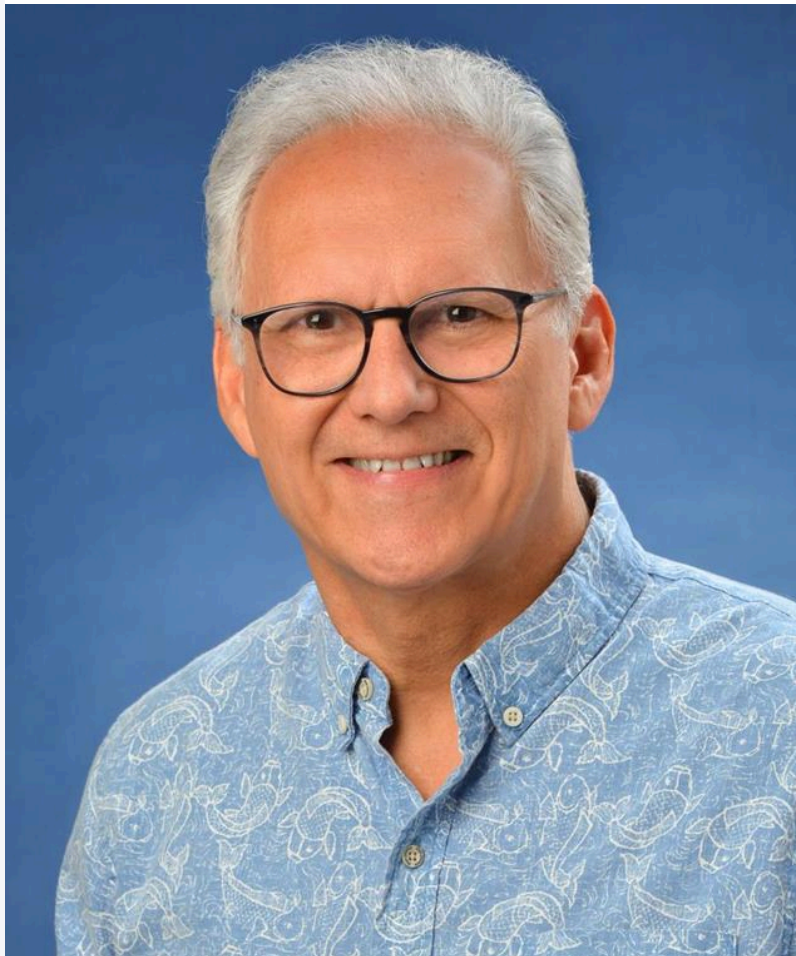




The Current Newsletter

March 2024



Mark's Message

Aloha kākou,

As we launch into 2024 in earnest, with multiple energy bills before the house, HSEO is making progress on Hawai'i's energy transition.

Under Governor Green's direction, our office has delivered significantly higher productivity in meaningful federal grant projects applied for and approved by the U.S. Department of Energy and FEMA than in previous years. In 2023, total federal grants awarded to Hawai'i were \$10.9 million and thus far in 2024, we have been awarded \$18.9, totaling close to \$30 million, 11 times the amount of funding secured for the State of Hawai'i than in the previous four years combined. This bodes well for our clean energy future and our near-term energy strategy, empowering us to take a quantum leap forward in securing resources for high-impact projects this year.

For example, in February, HSEO was encouraged to submit a \$250 million grant request to the US Department of Energy for \$500 million in grid improvements (including \$250 million in matching funds) in collaboration with KIUC and Hawaiian Electric. This week, we submitted an application to FEMA for Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant funding for the construction of two critical customer hubs on Maui, and we are assisting the Climate Commission with the completion of a Priority Climate Action Plan to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions that are long-lasting and certain.

On November 27, 2023, US DOE Under-Secretary for Infrastructure, David Crane, who oversees the new Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations, invited HSEO to be one of four states chosen to apply for early start of a \$34 million energy efficiency appliance rebate program under the Inflation Reduction Act. HSEO submitted its full application to US DOE on December 30, 2023, and we expect approval to begin development of the rebate program by April-May of 2024, targeting low- and middle-income families. You will read more about the program in this newsletter.

Hawai'i's march towards decarbonization presents a generational opportunity to develop a large local workforce to design, implement, build, operate, and maintain new technologies and projects. HSEO has teamed up with renewable energy developers to recruit trainees ready to take on jobs and build meaningful careers as we reduce our dependence on fuels imported from other countries, stabilize electricity costs, and reduce our carbon footprint.

Our initiation of a complete Alternative Fuels Analysis – to determine the potential greenhouse gas emissions benefit, if any, for bridge fuel, is underway; the measure of which will be reduced energy costs in the integrated electricity and transportation sectors, increased system reliability and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

With Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. E. G.', is written over a horizontal line.

Bills Before the House

The following bills have passed their initial committee hearings.

[HB1972 HD1](#) - Establishes a working group within the Hawai'i State Energy Office to make recommendations for the reuse and recycling of electric vehicle batteries.

[HB2105](#) - Requires the Hawai'i State Energy Office to conduct a statewide environmental assessment for slim-hole geothermal exploration.

[HB2291](#) - Establishes the Hawai'i sustainable aviation fuel program within the State Energy Office in order to establish a sustainable fuel portfolio standard for the use of aviation fuels.

[HB2297](#) - Requires the Hawai'i state energy office to adopt rules governing a clean fuel standard for alternative fuels to reduce emissions in the State.

[HB2367](#) - Clarifies that the party responsible for renewable portfolio standards support and reporting on certain energy matters shall be the Chief Energy Officer of the Hawai'i State Energy Office.

[SB2499](#) - Requires the Hawai'i State Energy Office to implement a Slim-hole Resource Characterization Program that identifies the location and characteristics of underground water and carbon sequestration resources across the State.

[SB2768 SD1](#) - Requires the Hawai'i State Energy Office to adopt rules governing a clean fuel standard for gasoline and diesel in the State.

[Find HSEO's ongoing Legislative Testimony here](#)



Energy in the News

Local News:

- Civil Beat: [A Huge Battery Has Replaced Hawaii's Last Coal Plant](#)
 - RN Drive - Separate stories podcast: [Hawai'i fires up mega battery to replace coal power plant](#)
- Star-Advertiser: [Plan for largest Hawaii hydroelectric plant is downsized](#)
- Civil Beat: [Will A New Order Shut The Door On Future Rooftop Solar Across Hawaii](#)
- Hawai'i Public Radio: [What do O'ahu's latest power outages mean for grid reliability?](#)
 - [Here's how power outages can have repercussions for Hawai'i's water supply](#)

Civil Beat: [Hawaiian Electric Gets The Green Light On Its \\$190 Million Resiliency Plan To Harden The Grid](#)

National News:

- Department of Energy: [First Group of States Apply for Landmark Home Energy Rebates Funding to Lower Energy Costs](#)
- USA Today: [How one state is quickly becoming America's clean energy paradise](#)

- Canary Media: [Chart: The world is building renewable energy faster than ever before](#)



Looking forward to Climate Week 2024

This year's Climate Week, March 23rd to the 31st, will feature the rollout of the **Fifth National Climate Assessment** and the official launch of **CCMAC's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan** at the **Imin Conference Center at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa**. Staff from the US Global Change Research Program, along with authors of the Hawai'i and US-Affiliated Pacific Islands, will be hosting the National Climate Assessment release event on **March 27th, from 9am to noon**.

[Want more details on Climate Week 2024?](#)



30 Statewide Recommendations for Decarbonization; Read HSEO's Full Report, and Submit Comments

HSEO is pleased to announce its on-time completion of the Hawai'i Legislature Economy-Wide Decarbonization Report specified in Act 238 (2022). The report provides analysis and more than 30 recommendations for statewide strategies and actions to meet Hawai'i's decarbonization objectives specified in [HRS 225p](#).

[Submit Comments on the Act 238 Report](#)



Diesel Replacement Rebate Opening March 28th

The Diesel Replacement Rebate (DRR) program will **be accepting new applications on March 28th at 9am**. This year the Build America Buy America requirements go into effect for projects that include an EV charger. **An informational webinar will be held on March 15 at 10am**. Interested participants can register at <https://energy.hawaii.gov/DRR>

What is the DRR?

The DRR program provides rebates of up to 45% for the replacement of medium- and heavy-duty diesel vehicles with new, battery-electric and hydrogen equivalents. Projects can include the purchase of one charging unit per vehicle.

How does Build America Buy America apply to Year 3 projects?

Build America Buy America (BABA) requires that all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in public infrastructure projects funded by federal dollars must be produced in the United States.

Start thinking about whether BABA your project applies now. If BABA applies to your project, you will need to provide a letter from the manufacturer that attests to BABA compliance. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions about your application prior to applying so you can have all of your paperwork ready.

For more information on the application process, please see the project website:
<https://energy.hawaii.gov/DRR>

If you have any questions about BABA requirements or the upcoming launch, please reach out to sage.a.lang@hawaii.gov



Explore the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate program today - Watch the webinar recording and share your thoughts

Mahalo to everyone who attended our recent webinar about the upcoming Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) program!

If you were not able to attend, the webinar recording and presentation are now [available on our website to view at your convenience](#). We also have a [feedback form](#) so you can send us your thoughts on the topic.

The HEAR rebate program is one of two new programs intended to help low- and moderate-income households reduce their energy burden through highly energy-efficient appliances and retrofits. Hawai'i was one of the first states chosen to apply for a total of \$68 million in home energy efficiency and electrification projects. Eligible households must provide proof of income (earn no more than 150% of Area Median Income) or be enrolled in an approved federal assistance program to qualify for a rebate. Renters will be

allowed to apply for rebates with the approval of property owners.

We are planning to launch an initial "rapid rollout" of specific rebates late-Spring/early-Summer; however, the actual timing depends on the availability of tools and resources the U.S. Department of Energy is developing to support the program. The HEAR program will expand later in the year in concert with the rollout of its sister HOMES retrofit program.

[Learn more about the HEAR Energy Rebate Program](#)



Clean Energy Wayfinders Nickie Shintani and Malia McDonald presenting at a new Waiʻanae Community Advocate Workshop Series on shaping a sustainable energy future, fostering shared values, and empowering informed decision-making.

Creating a Pono Energy System in Waiʻanae Moku

The Waiʻanae Clean Energy Wayfinders Nickie Shintani and Malia McDonald, in collaboration with the L.E.I. Foundation, Waiʻanae Sustainability Cooperative, and Sierra Club of Hawaiʻi started 2024 off strong with a new Waiʻanae Community

Advocate Workshop Series. These workshops create a space where community members can come together to establish shared values and energy priorities, learn about various energy topics, and co-create a pono energy system in Wai'anae moku. The goal of this series is to envision and pursue a future where community is empowered to make informed decisions for energy projects in their lived environment that align with their needs and values.

The team successfully held three workshops on January 9th, 30th, and February 27th, with upcoming dates set for March 27th and April 23rd. Community members of different backgrounds and experiences attended the January workshops to learn and provide valuable mana'o to guide future discussions, including energy injustices they see in Wai'anae, changes they'd like to see, how to make Wai'anae more liveable and resilient, and policy recommendations. Looking forward, we hope to increase workshop attendance, build upon identified priorities, and set actionable outcomes for a thriving Wai'anae moku.



Keiki at Hilo YMCA immerse in fun and learning about energy, from solar-powered brownie baking to hands-on circuit experiments, led by Clean Energy Wayfinder Cyrene Farrar.

Keiki Clean Energy Classes at the Hilo YMCA

“Our keiki come to the Hilo YMCA to have fun,” said Martha Rodillas, the Island of Hawai‘i YMCA Director. With that directive in mind, Hawai‘i Island Clean Energy Wayfinder Cyrene Farrar set off to make learning about energy fun. Cyrene held keiki clean energy classes at the Hilo YMCA to demonstrate various energy technologies and principles in new and exciting ways. The keiki used a Solartube to make brownies and raced micro solar-powered cars to learn about energy from the sun. The car assembly ended up being led by a brilliant 11-year-old girl whose father was a mechanic, and the activity demonstrated to all what a PV panel taking up 1/5 of the car’s surface area could do. They also drew with conductive ink and held hands in a circle with an Energy Stick while learning the basics of electronic circuits (The stick makes little electronic happy sounds when the circuit’s completed!)

While these activities were fun for all, it begs the question: what was the most coveted gadget for the keiki? That happens to be a hand-cranked radio that Cyrene received at a Vibrant Hawai‘i resource fair. Whoever cranks the radio, gets to crank the tunes!

The Clean Energy Wayfinders are always looking for more opportunities to bring energy conversations to you in new and exciting ways! If you are interested in working with a Clean Energy Wayfinder in your community, please visit our website to see where the Wayfinders are and submit a contact form to get connected.

[Check out the Clean Energy Wayfinders](#)

HAWAI'I GREEN BUSINESS FORUM



[Check out previous years' awardees!](#)

Get Recognized for Your Green Practices; Hawai'i Green Business Program Deadline is March 29th

The [Hawai'i Green Business Program \(HGBP\)](#) is accepting checklists for the next round of 2023-2024 green businesses to be recognized next Spring 2024. **The new deadline to complete and submit the HGBP checklist is March 29, 2024.**

[Get recognized for your green practices and be a part of the HGBP](#)



Read HSEO's 2023 Annual Report

Year-in-review of renewable energy projects, energy efficiency programs, policy developments, and the state's progress toward achieving its energy goals.

[HSEO's 2023 Annual Report](#)



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