



University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute

School of Ocean & Earth Science & Technology

The Current State of Photovoltaics

The sun is our “ultimate” renewable energy source: Every second of every day, about 120,000 trillion watts of solar energy is striking the earth’s surface -- at the same time humankind’s current consumption of electricity is averaging a “mere” 15 trillion watts (give or take a trillion!). But, what does this really mean when it comes to developing practical solar-to-electricity conversion systems for meeting world needs, and in particular, Hawaii’s needs? This talk discusses the current technological and economic status of semiconductor-based photovoltaic systems for direct solar-to-electric energy conversion, and describes some interesting photovoltaic demonstration projects already operating on Oahu (including the Navy’s Ford Island “Hangar 54” Installation, and HECO’s “Sunpower for Schools” Program).

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