



Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute Research Highlights

Energy Policy & Analysis

Community Outreach and Technical Assistance

OBJECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANCE: The objective of this effort is to provide technical and policy support to community groups across Hawai'i, empowering them to engage effectively in the state's energy transition. The project bridges technical expertise with community knowledge and priorities, helping ensure that Hawai'i's path toward 100% renewable energy is inclusive, equitable, and grounded in local values.

BACKGROUND: HNEI's community engagement and policy support efforts build upon long-standing collaborations with local organizations and stakeholders committed to advancing clean energy transitions. In coordination with the Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project (ETIPP) program, HNEI works with Upcountry Maui communities to develop strategies for resilient, locally relevant energy systems. In parallel, participation in the Energy Equity Hui ensures that underrepresented voices are reflected in statewide policy discussions, while presentations to the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows provide emerging community leaders with insights into Hawai'i's renewable energy goals and opportunities.

These partnerships foster a more collaborative and informed approach to energy planning, aligning technical solutions with the social, cultural, and economic contexts unique to each community. By making complex policy and regulatory processes accessible to community leaders and residents, this work supports informed participation and locally driven energy solutions.

PROJECT STATUS/RESULTS: By supporting initiatives such as the Upcountry ETIPP, Hawai'i's Energy Equity Hui, Moloka'i Clean Energy Hui, the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows, and the Maui Community Energy Alliance, this work strengthens local capacity to participate in regulatory, policy, and planning processes that shape Hawai'i's energy future.

In 2025, HNEI provided targeted technical and policy support to several community initiatives.

Upcountry ETIPP: Conducted webinars explaining the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) processes and energy planning frameworks; supported community understanding of time-of-use (TOU) rates through

presentations and written Q&A responses; collaborated with local leaders on data requests and program strategies for Phase 2 of ETIPP; and contributed to the review of ETIPP program results.

Energy Equity Hui: Participated in monthly meetings representing HNEI, contributing technical insights and policy perspectives to discussions on equitable energy access and affordability.

Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows: Delivered presentations on Hawai'i's clean energy goals, highlighting pathways and challenges in achieving 100% renewable electricity and encouraging future leaders to engage in policy and planning efforts.

Maui Community Energy Alliance: Supported the Technical Committee in conducting a comprehensive assessment of renewable energy options for Maui, examining the benefits and trade-offs of technologies including, but not limited to, hydrogen, geothermal, and solar PV with battery storage. The findings were synthesized into a public-facing overview, published on the MCEA website, to enhance community understanding and transparency in local energy planning.

Additionally, HNEI provided policy and regulatory support by providing strategic policy advice to community groups considering intervention in PUC dockets, helping them navigate regulatory procedures and develop informed, effective positions.

Through these activities, HNEI strengthened community understanding of Hawai'i's energy system and increased local capacity to participate meaningfully in shaping the state's clean energy transition.

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