



Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute Research Highlights

Energy Policy & Analysis Hawai'i Energy Policy Forum

OBJECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANCE: Through this project, HNEI supports the activities of the Hawai'i Energy Policy Forum (HEPF) in its mission to enable informed decisions to advance Hawai'i's clean energy future by convening a network of stakeholders for fact finding, analysis, information sharing, and advocacy.

BACKGROUND: The HEPF was established in 2002 by the University of Hawai'i's College of Social Sciences as a collaborative energy planning and policy group consisting of Hawai'i's electric utilities, oil and natural gas suppliers, environmental and community groups, renewable energy industry, academia, and federal, state, and local government. In its first five years, the Forum was instrumental in promoting funding and needed reform for the State's utility regulatory agencies (i.e., the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the Division of Consumer Advocacy), and commissioning studies, reports, and briefings to raise the level of dialog concerning energy issues for legislators and the general public. The Forum sponsors and organizes a Legislative Briefing at the Capitol at the opening of each legislative session, an annual Hawai'i Clean Energy Day event, and sponsors programs to develop reliable information and educate and raise awareness in the community. Historically, HNEI faculty members have contributed significantly to HEPF activities, including sitting on the HEPF's Steering Committee, chairing the Transportation and Electricity Working Groups, and hosting and coordinating the weekly ThinkTech "[Hawai'i: State of Clean Energy](#)" show.

PROJECT STATUS/RESULTS:

HEPF Restructure in 2021

The combination of key staff departures and impacts to staff and programs from the pandemic, the School of Social Sciences wound down the operations of HEPF during 2021. In the Spring and Summer of 2021, HNEI was approached to take over the operations and management of HEPF and the HNEI Director agreed to transfer HEPF to become a program of HNEI, with the transition starting in September of 2021. Since that time, HNEI has hired two graduate research assistants, established an office, transferred assets from the School of Social Sciences to HNEI, and reached out to existing and new members to establish the programmatic focus

and content for 2022 and beyond under the direction of HNEI.

Hawai'i Legislative Briefing

Prior to the restructure, the Hawai'i State Energy Office and the Hawai'i Energy Policy Forum held the 2021 Legislative Energy Briefing on January 15th. The agenda included a wide range of speakers who shared their current situation, challenges, and 2021 solutions to help Hawai'i achieve a resilient, prosperous, carbon free economy.

Member-Driven Initiatives, Online Resources and Outreach

Peer Exchanges: Due to COVID-19, HEPF conducted member to member exchanges of best practices virtually from August of 2020 and through the first quarter of 2021, starting with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) regarding multi-modal mobility hubs. The State's Climate Change Commission sought and was awarded grant funds from O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization and other sources to develop a plan for assessment of state parking facilities statewide that will allow for multi-modal use.

Online Resources: In the past two years, HEPF updated and created new resources for members and the public focusing on policy in the legislature and the PUC as described below:

- 2020 State legislature bill tracking spreadsheet, documenting the progression of bills and the final scope of bills passed;
- Updated State Act Database to 1999-2020 (from 2002-2018), which includes topic categorization, and links to the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, act text, and measure history;
- Summary of PUC energy docket proceedings and key updates;
- Compilation of existing federal policies related to energy, which includes a description of the policy (as of June 2020), policy type, relevant sector, managing agency and federal citations to amendments; and
- COVID-19 resources website page providing synthesized COVID-19 related energy information, which included summaries of COVID-19 docket proceedings that aim to mitigate the effects of the crisis including: cost

deferrals, suspending termination/disconnection, and the fuel supply contract between Hawaiian Electric Company and Par Hawai'i. This information was also disseminated via a handout titled 'What's changed since COVID-19? A snapshot of the electricity sector', which includes figures using publicly available data to observe what has happened in the electricity sector since COVID-19.

Video Series: HEPF is partnered with ThinkTech Hawai'i to produce five energy-related video streaming series (ranging from weekly to monthly) to inform and engage the public on energy issues, challenges, and actions to advance Hawai'i's clean energy future, available at <https://thinktechhawaii.com/>. Videos are livestreamed and available as recordings.

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