



## ENERGY: POWER, PEOPLE, AND PLACE

*Bringing together leaders, policymakers, cooperatives, and energy innovators, the 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference will discuss pathways to resilience and sustainability using firm (dispatchable source) power, while incorporating the lessons learned from successful indigenous projects.*

*From geothermal in Hawaii to energy projects on tribal lands and cooperative models across the U.S. and New Zealand, participants will share experiences and strategies for advancing energy solutions while maintaining harmony with local landscapes and traditions.*

*Join us May 20 and 21 to engage in meaningful dialogue on how policy, technology, and cultural wisdom can shape a resilient and more affordable energy future across all generations.*

## REGISTER NOW

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

**7:00 AM**    **REGISTRATION** | [Founders Courtyard](#)  
**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST** | **SPONSORED BY HAWAIIAN ELECTRIC**

**8:00**        **E KOMO MAI** (Welcome) | [Castle Theater](#)  
Leslie Wilkins, President and CEO, Maui Economic Development Board, Inc.

#### WELCOME

Richard Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui

#### CULTURAL OPENING

Kumu Kaponō'ai Molitau, Director, County of Maui 'Ōiwi Resources

**8:30**        **OPENING KEYNOTE**

*New Zealand born with deep ties to Hawaii (his wife is Kanaka Maoli), Mana Newton will give insight into how geothermal energy projects are providing revenue to indigenous residents of Aotearoa, NZ, in a manner that is intended to be respectful to the culture. These projects are not hypothetical; they are real projects providing both needed electricity and needed funding.*



**Mana Newton**  
Group CEO  
Tauhara North No. 2 Trust, New Zealand

9:00

## RESILIENCE & MICROGRIDS

*Lessons from Remote and Island Communities: selected areas share lessons on microgrids, storage, and resilient infrastructure.*

Moderated by:

**Robert "Rocky" Mould**, Executive Director, Hawaii Solar Energy Association

Panelists:

**Russell Garcia**, Development Director, Higher Education, Johnson Controls Sustainable Infrastructure

**Andrew MacCalla**, Founder & CEO, Collective Energy

**Ferdinand Ramos-Soegaard**, Associate Commissioner, Negociado de Energia de Puerto Rico

10:00

## COFFEE BREAK AND EXHIBIT SESSION | SPONSORED BY PAR HAWAII

### RELAX AND RECHARGE AT THE ULUPONO INITIATIVE CHARGING LOUNGE | [Castle Lobby](#)

10:30

### DEEP DIVE: WATER AND ENERGY | [Higashi Meeting Room](#)

*Despite being surrounded by water, many communities in Hawai'i face ongoing water shortages—including those in areas impacted by the 2023 fires. This panel will explore current and emerging options for seawater desalination, the status of desalination plans on O'ahu and Maui, and the energy challenges that influence the feasibility and cost of these technologies.*

**Ben Sullivan** owner of LeaHi Design will lead the Deep Dive discussion. Transitioning from a background in design and construction and 15 years in local government, Ben is collaborating to support innovative built environment solutions for energy, water, waste, and transportation that center community ownership and sustainability as keys to affordability and resilience in Hawaii. Ben will be joined by **Barry Usagawa** Program Administrator with the Honolulu Board of Water Supply and **Lauren Roth Venu** CEO of 3Water, Inc.

10:30

### FEATURED PRESENTATION | THE "MAUI METHOD"

**Christopher Wegner**, Hazard Mitigation Specialist, Maui Emergency Management Agency

10:45

### HIGHER SOLAR COSTS & 100% RPS

*If tariffs and decreasing tax credits make solar more expensive, should Hawaii re-think its commitment to clean energy? Changing state and federal policies could make electricity costs from utility-scale and distributed PV projects in Hawaii higher than "avoided cost" of burning fossil fuel for the first time in decades. Will this effect customers' appetite for solar? How will the industry and regulators adjust? Should this change Hawaii's quest for 100% renewable generation by 2045?*

Moderated by:

**Wren Wescoatt**, VP of Development, Longroad Energy

Panelists:

**Jeffrey Mikulina**, Climate and Social Impact Strategist, Climate Hawaii

**Nicola Park**, Director, Clearway Energy

**Josh Powell**, CEO and Co-Founder, RevoluSun

**11:45**      **NETWORKING LUNCH** | Founders Courtyard

**EXHIBIT SESSION WITH DESSERTS** | Exhibit Hall

**1:15 PM**      **FEATURED PRESENTATION | BEST PRACTICES FOR ADDING LARGE LOAD TO THE GRID**

**Mark Kolesar**, Senior Advisor, Ankura Consulting Group, Canada

**1:30**      **CYBERSECURITY FOR HAWAII'S RESILIENT ENERGY FUTURE**

*Hawaii sits at the crossroads of the Indo-Pacific, making the resilience of its energy systems not only a local priority but a matter of national security. As the state advances toward a cleaner, smarter, and more distributed energy grid, the cyber risks facing utilities, microgrids, and critical infrastructure continue to grow in scale and sophistication. At the same time, Hawaii hosts one of the largest concentrations of U.S. military forces in the world, with installations that depend on reliable, secure energy to support missions across the region. This panel brings together leaders from the energy sector, cybersecurity community, and the Federal government to discuss how Hawaii can strengthen its cyber posture through coordinated action.*

Moderated by:

**Edward Tavares**, Vice President Chief Information and Security Officer, Hawaiian Electric

Panelists:

**Jimmie Collins**, Chief of Planning and Operations, State of Hawaii Office of Homeland Security

**Jordan Henry**, Director Cybersecurity Research Center - National Lab of the Rockies

**2:30**      **AFTERNOON BREAK | SPONSORED BY IBEW LOCAL 1260**

**3:00**      **BEST PRACTICES IN PERMITTING AND POLICIES**

*As communities work to deploy resilient and dispatchable energy resources, permitting and regulatory processes often become a major barrier. Projects frequently cross local, state, federal, and indigenous jurisdictions, creating complex approval pathways that can delay urgently needed energy investments. At the same time, permitting systems exist for important reasons: to protect environmental resources, respect cultural values, and ensure meaningful community engagement. This panel will explore how governments, utilities, and project developers can streamline permitting processes while maintaining these essential safeguards, and share lessons on cross-agency coordination, early stakeholder engagement, and policy approaches that help accelerate responsible energy development.*

Moderated by:

**Jonathan Koehn**, Director, Climate Initiatives Department, City of Boulder

Panelists:

**Leila Banijamali**, CEO, Symbium

**Representative Greggor Ilagan**, Hawaii State House District 4

**4:00-5:30 PM**      **NETWORKING RECEPTION** | Exhibit Hall

## THURSDAY, MAY 21

**7:00 AM REGISTRATION | Founders Courtyard**  
**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST | SPONSORED BY TETRA TECH**

**8:00 OVERVIEW OF DAY ONE AND DEEP DIVE**

**Jacqui Hoover**, Chair, Conference Program Committee; Executive Director and COO Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB); and President Hawaii Leeward Planning  
**Ben Sullivan**, Owner, LeaHI Design

**8:30 POWER, PEOPLE, AND PLACE (90 min)**

*Starting plenary conversation with cultural leaders, energy executives, and policymakers on how Hawaii is redefining "generation" --power generation, cultural generation, and generational responsibility. Models from Hawaii, Tribal Nations, and the Pacific. How communities are designing and governing their own projects, what works, what fails, and what others can learn. Geothermal energy in Hawaii. What is the right model?*

Moderated by:

**Nā'ālehu Anthony**, Activist, changemaker and storyteller

Panelists:

**Andy Blair**, Co-Founder & Director, Upflow, New Zealand  
**Mana Newton**, Group CEO, Tauhara North No. 2 Trust, New Zealand  
**Wayne Yazza**, Director of Utilities, Picuris Pueblo Indian Tribe

**10:00 COFFEE BREAK AND EXHIBIT SESSION | SPONSORED BY ISLAND ENERGY SERVICES | Exhibit Hall**

**RELAX AND RECHARGE AT THE ULUPONO INITIATIVE CHARGING LOUNGE | Castle Lobby**

**10:30 FEATURED PRESENTATION | HARDENING THE GRID**

**10:45 LNG IN HAWAII**

*Liquefied natural gas (LNG) has periodically surfaced in Hawai'i's energy discussions, but many key assumptions about its costs, emissions, and infrastructure requirements remain uncertain. This panel will explore what it would actually take to introduce LNG into the state's energy system. Panelists will examine potential supply pathways, landed cost considerations, infrastructure needs, and the economic and regulatory challenges associated with LNG development in Hawai'i. The discussion will focus on identifying key barriers, risks, and opportunities as stakeholders evaluate whether and how LNG could fit within Hawai'i's evolving energy landscape.*

Moderated by:

**Jennifer Potter**, Faculty Energy Specialist, Hawaii Natural Energy Institute (HNEI)

Panelists:

**Erik Montague**, VP Development, JERA America  
**Rick Rocheleau**, Director, Hawaii Natural Energy Institute  
**Stephen Walls**, Deputy Energy Officer, Hawaii State Energy Office

**11:45**      **NETWORKING LUNCH |** Founders Courtyard  
**EXHIBIT SESSION WITH DESSERT |** Exhibit Hall

**1:15 PM**      **FEATURED PRESENTATION**

**1:30**      **RENEWABLE FUEL SUPPLY FOR HAWAII**

*HECO is preparing its next round of Firm Renewable Energy procurement and has announced several contract awards. Hawaii Gas has published its Integrated Resource Plan and filed its first-ever Renewable Gas Tariff with the Public Utilities Commission. Where is the biofuel going to come from? Who's working on this? What kind of fuel, what is it made from, and where from? What's the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions carbon intensity? What's the status of projects? What is the assessed beneficial impact?*

Moderated by:

Panelists:

**Bob King**, President, Pacific Biodiesel  
**Joelle Simonpietri**, Founder and CEO, Aloha Carbon  
**Jamie Ware**, Project Director, Par Hawaii

**2:30**      **AFTERNOON BREAK | SPONSORED BY MOSS & ASSOCIATES |** Exhibit Hall

**3:00**      **CULTIVATING A ROBUST CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE**

*A session exploring the needs for recruiting, training and retaining, to facilitate the development of the diverse workforce needed for Hawaii's clean energy transition.*

Moderated by:

**Samantha Larson**, Project Manager, AE Consulting

Panelists:

**Spencer Alexander**, Teacher, James Campbell High School  
**Leroy Chincio**, Business Manager/Financial Secretary, IBEW 1260  
**Kazu Hayashida**, Manager of Workforce Planning, Hawaiian Electric  
**Damien Kim**, Business Manager/Financial Secretary, IBEW 1186

**4:00**      **CLOSING**

**4:15 -**      **WOMEN IN RENEWABLE ENERGY (WIRE) PAU HANA |** Founders Courtyard  
**5:45 PM**

*Enjoy live music and light appetizers as you network with WiRE members. Open to all attendees.*

## 2026 Program Committee

**Beth Amaro** | Member Services and Communications Manager, Kauai Island Utility Cooperative

**Colton Ching** | Senior Vice President, Planning & Technology, Hawaiian Electric

**Michael Colón** | Director, Energy Sector, Ulupono Initiative

**Jacqui Hoover** | Chair, Conference Program Committee; Executive Director and COO Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB); and President Hawaii Leeward Planning

**Damien Kim** | Business Manager/Financial Secretary, International Brotherhood Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1186

**Jonathan Koehn** | Director, Climate Initiatives Department, City of Boulder

**Doug McLeod** | Member, DKK Energy Services, LLC

**Robert "Rocky" Mould** | Executive Director, Hawaii Solar Energy Association

**Jennifer Potter** | Faculty Energy Specialist, Hawaii Natural Energy Institute (HNEI)

**Joelle Simonpietri** | Owner, Simonpietri Enterprises

**Wren Wescoatt** | VP of Development, Longroad Energy

**Jennifer Zelko-Schlueter** | Director, Government and Community Relations, Hawaiian Electric