

13th

HAWAII ENERGY CONFERENCE+EXHIBITION

May 20-21, 2026 | Maui Arts & Cultural Center

PRESS KIT

Fast Facts | FAQs | Press Releases



Presented by  **maui economic**
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Location: Maui Arts & Cultural Center
1 Cameron Way, Kahului

Event Date: May 20-21, 2026

On-Line: <https://hawaiienergyconference.com>
Program: <https://hawaiienergyconference.com/program/>
Facebook: [hienergyconference](https://www.facebook.com/hienergyconference)
X: [@HIenergyconf](https://twitter.com/HIenergyconf)
#HEC2026

Contact: Annette Lynch, Program Director, Conference Services
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Office: 808-270-6811 Email: annette@medb.org
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PRESENTERS This event is presented by **Maui Economic Development Board** supported by the **County of Maui Office of Economic Development**.

The Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation established in 1982 with a mission to diversify Maui County's economy, building pathways to innovation, jobs and opportunities for our residents. Through partnerships with the public and private sector, MEDB undertakes projects that assist growth industries with navigating and thriving in our county, educates and trains residents for new careers, and engages our community in forums that determine future economic directions.

The Office of Economic Development is Maui County's center for advocacy for business development and entrepreneurship for all sectors of our economy. They are dedicated to creating synergy from government to the private sector in Energy, Agriculture, Tourism, Culture and Arts, Film, Workforce Development, and Business Development; and are a catalyst for diversifying Maui's economy.

www.hawaiienergyconference.com

FAST FACTS - continued

2026 THEME - Energy: Power, People & Place

Bringing together leaders, policymakers, cooperatives, and energy innovators, the 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference will discuss pathways to resilience and sustainability using firm 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.

Sessions will address topics such as when solar is firm, whether biofuel is always firm power, whether firm power will allow for lower electric bills, and impacts on resilience.

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.

Who should attend?

- Renewable energy industry professionals
- Developers and contractors interested in microgrids and off-grid
- Workforce development experts and organized labor representatives
- People interested in how energy and housing connect
- Climate and energy policymakers and regulators
- Entrepreneurs and innovators
- Environmentalists and sustainability advocates

HISTORY

The Hawaii Energy Conference (HEC) brings together experts on energy policy, strategies, leadership and innovation. Energy leaders from Hawaii, the Continental U.S., Asia-Pacific and more to exchange ideas on how to better serve our communities in today's rapidly changing power generation and delivery environment.

The first Energy Conference on Maui was held in 2014 to explore the challenges and opportunities in our nation's transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Maui is a locus for major energy initiatives. The island has attracted leading national and international energy players and leads the nation with the highest density of EV usage. Hawaii was the first state to set a goal of being 100% renewable with a target of 2045 and is among the highest in the nation per capita for PV installations.

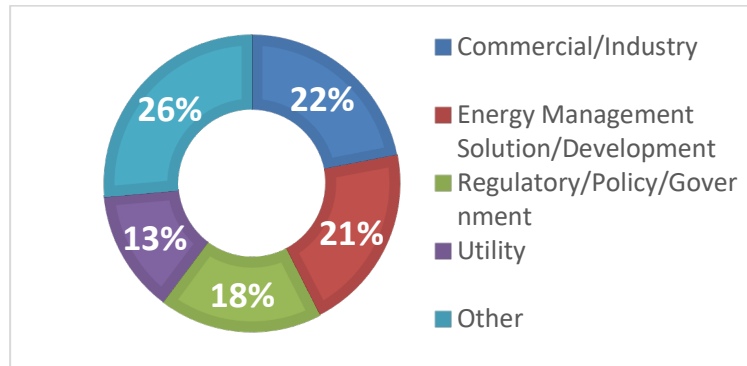
Originally titled the Maui Energy Conference, the name was changed to Hawaii Energy Conference in 2019 to reflect what it has always been—the premier Energy Conference in Hawaii focused on statewide interests as seen through the prism of national and international developments in energy. From 2020 through to 2022 the conference was held virtually due to COVID-19.

A program committee establishes a theme for each conference, identifies speakers and develops the program featuring keynote presentations, panel discussions, networking and exhibits. Topics covered have included: the future of electric utilities, Hawaii's progress toward becoming 100% renewable, decarbonization, energy equity, innovation in the industry and more.

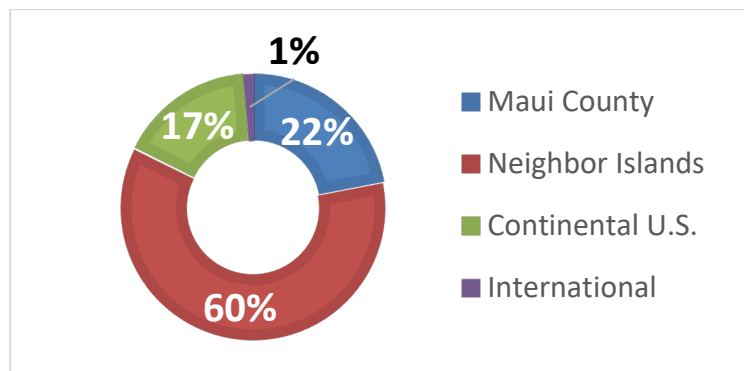
FAST FACTS - continued

2025 ATTENDANCE

BY INDUSTRY



BY LOCALE



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 LLC

Wren Wescoatt | VP of Development, Longroad Energy

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

FAST FACTS - continued

MAHALO TO 2026 SPONSORS *Updated 3/4/2026*

Stakeholder

Ulupono Initiative

Advocate

Hawaiian Electric
IBEW Local 1260
Moss & Associates

Par Hawaii
Tetra Tech

Supporter

AES Hawaii
Ameresco
Hawaii Gas
Integrity Environmental LLC
JM Distributed Solutions
Kauai Island Utility Cooperative

Leadsun
Novatech Automation
Puna Geothermal Ventures – Ormat
Trio Energy Alliance
WPS

EXHIBITORS

AES Hawaii; Ameresco; IBEW Local 1260; Integrity Environmental LLC
JM Distributed Solutions; Leadsun; Moss & Associates; Novatech Automation
Puna Geothermal Ventures – Ormat; Tetra Tech; Trio Energy Alliance; WPS

Who are the keynote speakers?

Mana Newton, Tauhara North No. 2 Trust has been invited to speak. New Zealand born with deep ties to Hawaii (his wife is Kanaka Maoli), Mana spent many years at Deloitte in both the USA practice, and as a partner in Deloitte New Zealand business advisory where he helped establish the Māori business development team. He has held various roles of governance supporting Māori entities to grow their commercial capability in a kaupapa Māori framework. Mana is focused on finding economic opportunity for indigenous residents of Aotearoa, and he sees parallels between Hawai'i and Aotearoa.

What other activities will the Hawaii Energy Conference feature?

In addition to panels and keynotes, the conference will have featured presentations to highlight Hawaii energy initiatives.

The conference includes one Deep Dive session. Complementing the main stage discussions, the session will provide an intimate setting for up to 40 participants to engage directly with experts and explore Water and Energy.

There will also be an exhibit hall with sponsors able to showcase their products or services. Networking is encouraged during breaks with breakfast, lunch and evening reception included in registration.

Why is this conference presented on Maui?

Maui is a locus for major energy initiatives. The island has attracted leading national and international energy players and leads the nation with the highest density of EV usage. Hawaii is among the highest in the nation per capita for PV installations. Renewable energy accounts for more than 50% of total energy usage on Maui.

In 2019, the name was changed from Maui Energy Conference to Hawaii Energy Conference to reflect what it has always been, the premier Energy Conference in Hawaii focused on statewide interests as seen through the prism of national and international developments in energy. The conference went virtual in 2020 in response to COVID-19 and return to the MACC welcoming in-person attendees in 2023.

What can we learn from these types of energy conversations?

At the inaugural 2014 conference, more than 200 recognized policy makers from state and federal government and the private sector gathered to talk candidly about the country's changing energy landscape and its implications for power utilities and consumers. The conference has since grown in scope, and size, and expects to welcome over 20% of its audience from international and U.S. mainland points. Past conference presentations and summary reports are found at: <https://hawaiienergyconference.com/archives>

FAQS - continued

How is the conference reaching out to customers, who cannot attend this conference live?

Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB) will be recording the conference proceedings for future broadcast on the conference website at

<https://hawaiienergyconference.com/archives/>

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HAWAII ENERGY CONFERENCE PRESS RELEASES *(latest to earliest)*

Contact: Annette Lynch, Maui Economic Development Board, Inc.
Ph: 808-270-6811 / Email: annette@medb.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Zealand Leaders to Headline 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference

KIHEI, Maui, Hawaii, March 05, 2026 – The 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference will welcome two influential leaders from New Zealand, bringing global insight and Indigenous perspectives to this year’s theme: Energy: Power, People, and Place. Presented by the Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB), the conference will feature keynote sessions, panels, case studies, and exhibits May 20–21, 2026, at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center.

Mana Newton, Group CEO at Tauhara North No. 2 Trust, will deliver the Day 1 keynote. The Trust was established under the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 to hold and sustainably manage the traditional lands and resources of the Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa people for the benefit of its owners and their whānau (extended family). Its mission is to balance commercial viability with cultural stewardship, ensuring the land remains in Māori ownership and continues to support current and future generations. It has joint ownership of the Nga Awa Purua geothermal power station alongside Mercury Energy.

New Zealand born with deep ties to Hawaii (his wife is Kanaka Maoli), Mana spent many years at Deloitte in both the USA practice, and as a partner in Deloitte New Zealand business advisory where he helped establish the Māori business development team. He has held various roles of governance supporting Māori entities to grow their commercial capability in a kaupapa Māori framework. Mana is focused on finding economic opportunity for indigenous residents of Aotearoa, and he sees parallels between Hawai’i and Aotearoa.

“A remote island in the Pacific experiencing a loss of population. Indigenous families leaving for the Mainland. Housing prices driven up to unaffordable levels by newcomers. You might think we are talking about Hawai’i. In this case we are talking about Aotearoa (New Zealand),” said Doug McLeod, a founding member of the HEC Program Committee. “People may remember that during Covid New Zealand took a strong stand against tourism and travel in an effort to stay isolated. What you might not know is that the economy of Aotearoa never recovered. Like Hawai’i, families with ancestral ties feel compelled to leave their home to pursue economic opportunity.”

In his keynote Mana Newton will explain how geothermal energy projects are providing revenue to indigenous residents of Aotearoa 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.

In addition to giving the keynote, Mana Newton will also join the panel on “Power, People and Place” that will look at models from Hawaii, Tribal Nations, and the Pacific. Moderated by Nā‘ālehu Anthony, Owner of Palikū Documentary Films, and Chair of the Honolulu Board of Water Supply; the panel will explore how communities design and govern their own energy projects.

Andrea (Andy) Blair, also of New Zealand, will join this panel, scheduled for Day 2. Andy is the Director of Business and Innovation and Co-founder of Upflow, a geothermal science, research and innovation company that builds expert teams to provide intelligent solutions to global industry. She is co-founder of Women in Geothermal (WING), the single largest geothermal association in the world that has grown into a global movement of people, both men and woman, supporting the empowerment and advancement of women within the industry. Andy is also the Immediate Past President of the International Geothermal Association (Netherlands) and a current Board Member for Global Women; a collaboration of New Zealand's most influential women leaders promoting inclusion and diversity for improved societal and economic growth.

Andy is one of five global winners of the United Nations WE Empower award 2023, a program that elevates and showcases the valuable contribution women entrepreneurs and business leaders can make toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals and solving the world's greatest challenges. She was featured in Forbes magazine "5 Female Founders Leading the Charge for a Sustainable Future." (May 2024) and in the 2024 Kings Birthday Honours was awarded the title of Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to the geothermal industry and to women.

A Native American representative from New Mexico and a local Native Hawaiian leader have been invited to round out this panel discussion with Nā'ālehu, Mana and Andy. Further details to be posted soon.

“We can learn a lot from indigenous models that often emphasize sustainable, community-centric approaches that leverage local resources and traditional knowledge,” said Jacqui Hoover, Conference Chair and Executive Director and COO Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB); and President Hawaii Leeward Planning. “By prioritizing local stewardship and cultural practices, indigenous frameworks can enhance energy security, foster resilience against external disruptions, and promote environmentally sustainable solutions.”

Other topics to be discussed on this year's stage include: Cyber Resilience; LNG in Hawaii; Renewable Fuel Supply for Hawaii; Best Practices in Permitting and Policies; Higher Solar Costs & 100% RPS; Resilience & Microgrids; and Cultivating a Robust Clean Energy Workforce.

The Hawaii Energy Conference is supported by the County of Maui Office of Economic Development and brings together experts and thought leaders to connect and explore the latest advancements shaping the energy landscape world-wide. The Conference expects to draw participation from Hawaii, the Continental U.S., Asia-Pacific, and more for the discussions on how policy, technology, and cultural wisdom can shape a resilient and more affordable energy future across all generations.

More details can be viewed at www.hawaiienergyconference.com. Registration is now open with early bird rates available until March 31.

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thriving in our county, educates and trains residents for new careers, and engages our community in forums that determine future economic directions.

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PHOTOS



CAPTION: Mana Newton, Tauhara North No. 2 Trust will deliver the keynote at HEC 2026



CAPTION: Andy Blair, Upflow (NZ) features on a panel on Day 2 of the Hawaii Energy Conference

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Energy: Power, People and Place the theme for 13th Hawaii Energy Conference

KIHEI, Maui, Hawaii, February 5, 2026 – Bringing together leaders, policymakers, cooperatives, and energy innovators, the 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference will discuss pathways to resilience and sustainability using firm power, while incorporating the lessons learned from successful indigenous projects.

Presented by the Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB), the two-day conference on May 20 & 21 will feature keynote speakers, panel discussions, case studies and an exhibit venue. 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.

"When considering how deeply interconnected energy supply, security, and resilience are, we can learn much from indigenous models." said Jacqui Hoover, Conference Chair and Executive Director and COO Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB); and President Hawaii Leeward Planning. "These models often emphasize sustainable, community-centric approaches that leverage local resources and traditional knowledge. By prioritizing local stewardship and cultural practices, indigenous frameworks can enhance energy security, foster resilience against external disruptions, and promote environmentally sustainable solutions that respect natural ecosystems."

"Integrating these indigenous models into broader energy strategies not only strengthens local autonomy but also contributes to a more resilient and secure energy future globally.," added Hoover. "The 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference will offer attendees the opportunity to learn about and discuss several different indigenous models, including successful Ma'ori geothermal operations."

Panels will address topics such as when solar is firm, whether biofuel is always firm power, whether firm power will allow for lower electric bills, and impacts on resilience.

The conference will once again include a Deep Dive session, after introducing the format in 2025. The session complements the main stage discussions, providing an intimate setting for up to 40 participants to engage directly with experts. This year the topic will be Water and Energy.

"The Deep Dive session will try to answer why islands in Hawaii that are surrounded by water experience water shortages when proven technology exists to desalinate saltwater," said Doug McLeod, DKK Energy Services and a founding member of the HEC Program Committee. "Participants will learn how energy use limits the use of Desal, how Oahu plans to add a desalination plant, and whether other islands should do the same. We plan to discuss the state of the art in desalination and how it relates to water use and conservation overall."

Many attend the Hawaii Energy Conference for the networking and exhibiting opportunities to connect with key stakeholders, industry experts, innovators, policymakers and more. Attendees will be able to engage in meaningful dialogue on how policy, technology, and cultural wisdom can shape a resilient and more affordable energy future across all generations.

www.hawaiienergyconference.com

Hoover concluded, “As Hawaii and the global community evaluate resources, development, and energy usage, we acknowledge that the methods we employ to produce, distribute, and secure energy for future generations are essential components of the energy equation. These components will be examined separately and regarded as a collective whole at the Hawaii Energy Conference 2026.”

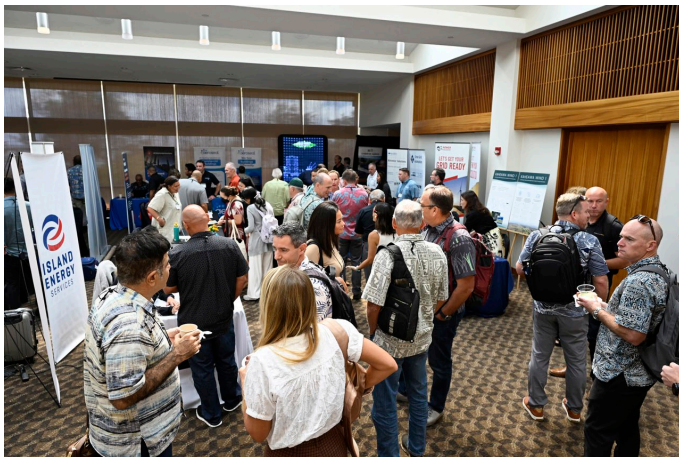
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Photos



Caption: The Exhibit Venue at HEC provides opportunities for networking with energy industry professionals



Caption: Conference Chair, Jacqui Hoover, moderates a featured session at the 2025 Hawaii Energy Conference