

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

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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.

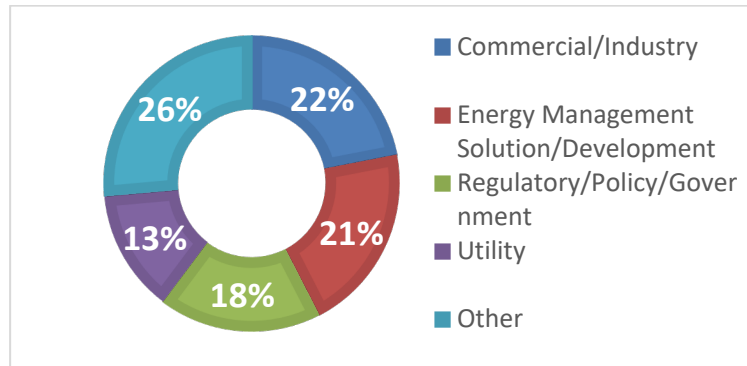
Originally titled the Maui Energy Conference, the name was changed to Hawaii Energy Conference in 2019 to reflect what it has always been—the premier Energy Conference in Hawaii focused on statewide interests as seen through the prism of national and international developments in energy. From 2020 through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

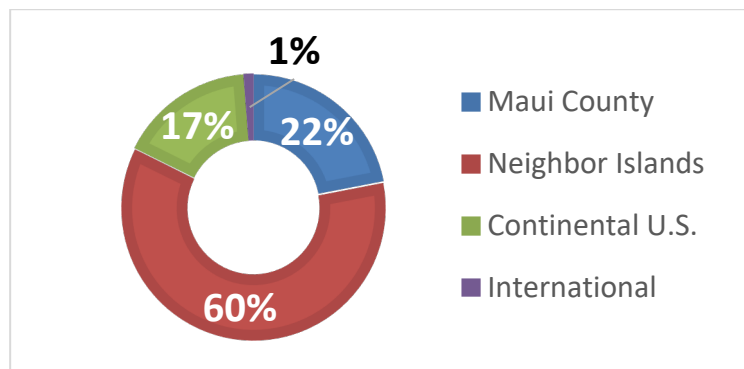
FAST FACTS - continued

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 5/7/2026*

Stakeholder

Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute

Ulu pono Initiative

Advocate

Hawaiian Electric

Moss & Associates

IBEW Local 1186

Par Hawaii

IBEW Local 1260

Tetra Tech

Island Energy Services

Supporter

AES Hawaii

Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative

Ameresco

Leadsun

Hawaii Gas

Noresco

Ikehu Utility Solutions

Novatech Automation

Integrity Environmental LLC

Puna Geothermal Ventures – Ormat

Jera Americas

Terraform Power

JM Distributed Solutions

Trio Energy Alliance

Johnson Controls

WPS

EXHIBITORS

AES Hawaii; Ameresco; IBEW Local 1186; IBEW Local 1260;
Idaho National Laboratories; Ikehu Utility Solutions; Integrity Environmental LLC;
Island Energy Services; JM Distributed Solutions; Johnson Controls; Leadsun;
Moss & Associates; Novatech Automation; Hawaii Renewable Fuels Coalition;
Terraform Power; 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.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Power, People and Place: Hawai‘i’s Energy Future in Focus at HEC 2026

KIHEI, Maui, Hawaii, May 7, 2026 – The countdown is on for the 13th Annual Hawaii Energy Conference (HEC) to be held at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center May 20 and 21 exploring the theme of Energy: Power, People and Place. Presented by Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB), with support by the County of Maui, the conference brings together leaders, policymakers, cooperatives, and energy innovators.

Speaking on a recent interview with Burt Lum on Hawaii Pacific Radio’s Bytemarks Café, the conference chair Jacqui Hoover explained, “Given the geopolitics of everything now – affordability, access, and reliability – I think we were very forward-thinking in coming up with the three P’s of the theme – Power, People and Place.”

Hoover is the Executive Director and COO Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB); and President Hawaii Leeward Planning. “To the credit of the great people I have the opportunity to work with on the program committee, they’re all looking at opportunities to incorporate lessons learned from around the globe that we can bring back to Hawaii while simultaneously recognizing the importance and uniqueness of our geography here, our climate here, and very importantly, our culture and people.”

“Hawaii is essentially an energy island laboratory, and it is on the cutting edge,” added Jennifer Potter, Faculty Energy Specialist with Hawaii Natural Energy Institute (HNEI), on the interview. “What we’ve done here in terms of distributed energy resources and photovoltaics on homes – we have almost 50% of the homes have photovoltaics of single-family homes. The penetration of utility-scale solar has been increasing exponentially, and the utilities have been able to figure out how they interconnect.”

Potter continued, “Every year the energy stakes are evolving and the conversations at the Hawaii Energy Conference keeps up. What we were debating 5 to 10 years ago, like the early RPS goals, is now shifted into how we actually do it.”

Potter will moderate the panel, “LNG in Hawaii,” a controversial topic discussed in the legislature this year. “We are bringing the stakeholders to the table – the ones that are making the case for LNG, and the ones that are really questioning whether it’s a valid and reasonable decision for the state to pursue. This is one of the forums where disagreement is productive. You hear those competing viewpoints, and that’s where the real learning happens.”

“The conversations that people have after the conference are really what helps move our energy laboratory forward,” concluded Potter.

Another panel of the Hawaii Energy Conference will discuss “Higher Solar Costs and 100% RPS.” There are concerns that reduction/elimination of tax credits/incentives could slow adoption of solar. Hawaii has set a very ambitious goal of 50,000 rooftop systems across the state in the next five years. Last week Hawaii’s House and Senate committee agreed to eliminate the Renewable Energy Technologies Income Tax Credit, just when state incentives are even more important with the reduction of federal incentives. Legislators are yet to vote on measure. The impact of tariffs and costs for utility-scale and residential solar will also be discussed in this panel moderated by Wren Wescoatt, VP of Development, Longroad Energy.

Beyond generation sources (solar, geothermal, wind, hydro, ocean energy concepts), the panels also address Cybersecurity; Permitting and policy; and Workforce development. In addition to eight Panel discussions and the “Water and Energy” Deep Dive session, the Hawaii Energy Conference will feature four 15-minute presentations with topics ranging from disposal of lithium batteries to grid maintenance as well as sustainability efforts on Moloka‘i.

FEATURED PRESENTATIONS TOPICS INCLUDE:

The Maui Method – Presented by Christopher Wegner, Hazard Mitigation Specialist with the Maui Emergency Management Agency, The Maui Method turns dangerous and damaged lithium batteries into non-hazardous waste.

Best Practices for Adding Large Load to the Grid – In this presentation, Mark Kolesar, Senior Advisor with Ankura Consulting Group, presents an overview of best practices in rate design for large loads with examples that provide adequate revenue, avoid cost shifting, maintain affordability, manage load adequacy, and manage utility risk.

Hardening the Grid – Presented by Marc Asano, the Director of Wildfire Strategy for Hawaiian Electric who oversees design and execution of quality assurance and control processes and continuous monitoring of system performance to ensure wildfire mitigations effectively reduce risk.

Energy Efficiency – Caroline Carl, Hawaii Energy, and Jennifer Yoshimura, Sustainable Moloka‘i will highlight the work they have done together.

The HEC program includes an exhibit venue featuring the latest renewable energy technologies and services, as well as social events to facilitate networking and collaboration. Program details and registration can be viewed at www.hawaiienergyconference.com. An advance rate offers savings to those registering before May 12.

Maui Economic Development Board is a 501c3 not-for-profit and appreciates the support of 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference sponsors: AES Hawaii, Ameresco, Hawaii Gas, Hawaiian Electric, Hawaii Natural Energy Institute, IBEW Local 1260, IBEW Local 1186, Ikehu Utility Solutions, Integrity Environmental, Island Energy Services, Jera Americas, JM Distributed Solutions, Johnson Controls, Kauai Island Utility Coop, Leadsun, Moss & Associates, Noresco, NovaTech Automation, Par Hawaii, Puna Geothermal Ventures, Tetra Tech, Trio Energy Alliance, Ulupono Initiative, WSP.

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PHOTOS



Jennifer Potter, HNEI, is on the HEC program committee and will moderate the panel “LNG in Hawaii”



Mark Kolesar, Ankura Consulting Group

Energy at the Crossroads: Hawaii Energy Conference Tackles Resilience and Sustainability

KIHEI, Maui, Hawaii, April 9, 2026 – The 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference (HEC) will explore the theme of Energy: Power, People and Place as it explores pathways to resilience and sustainability using firm power, while incorporating the lessons learned from successful indigenous projects. Presented by Maui Economic Development Board, with support by the County of Maui, the conference will be held over two days at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center May 20 and 21, bringing together leaders, policymakers, cooperatives, and energy innovators.

“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,” said Jacqui Hoover, Conference Chair and Executive Director and COO Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB); and President Hawaii Leeward Planning. “These components will be examined separately and regarded as a collective whole at the Hawaii Energy Conference 2026.”

The conference seeks a balance in topics and viewpoints for its audience - looking outward to lessons in energy in other states and countries to bring best-practice to Hawaii; as well as having the local conversations to share these lessons with our neighbors.

Mana Newton, Group CEO at Tauhara North No. 2 Trust, New Zealand will bring an international and indigenous perspective to the Day 1 keynote. With deep ties to Hawaii, Mana is focused on finding economic opportunity for indigenous residents of Aotearoa, and he sees parallels between Hawai'i and Aotearoa. The trust's 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.

The conference will include a Deep Dive session that 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’ exploring current and emerging options for seawater desalination, the status of desalination plans on Oahu and Maui, and the energy challenges that influence the feasibility and cost of these technologies. Ben Sullivan owner of LeaHi Design will lead the discussion, with panelists Barry Usagawa of Honolulu Board of Water Supply and Lauren Roth Venu CEO of 3Water, Inc.

PANEL TOPICS INCLUDE:

Resilience & Microgrids – Learn lessons from remote and island communities with selected areas sharing lessons on microgrids, storage, and resilient infrastructure.

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?

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.

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.

Power, People and Place - 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?

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.

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?

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.

The panel discussions will be broken up with featured presentations. Christopher Wegner, Hazard Mitigation Specialist, Maui Emergency Management Agency will present “The Maui Method”, a game-changer for turning dangerous EV batteries to nonhazardous waste. Mark Kolesar, Senior Advisor with Ankura Consulting Group, Canada will present “Best Practices for Adding Large Load to the Grid.”

The program includes an exhibit venue featuring the latest renewable energy technologies and services, as well as social events to facilitate networking and collaboration. Program details and registration can be viewed at www.hawaiienergyconference.com. An advance rate offers savings to those registering before May 12.

The cross-section of attendees at the annual Hawaii Energy Conference include: renewable energy industry professionals; developers and contractors interested in microgrids and off-grid; workforce development experts and organized labor representatives; those interested in the intersection between energy and housing; climate and energy policymakers and regulators; entrepreneurs and innovators; and environmentalists and sustainability advocates.

Maui Economic Development Board is a 501c3 not-for-profit and appreciates the support of 2026 Hawaii Energy Conference sponsors: AES Hawaii, Ameresco, Hawaii Gas, Hawaiian Electric, IBEW Local 1186, IBEW Local 1260, Integrity Environmental, Island Energy Services, JM Distributed Solutions, Kauai Island Utility Coop, Leadsun, Moss & Associates, NovaTech Automation, Par Hawaii, Puna Geothermal Ventures, Terraform Power, Tetra Tech, Trio Energy Alliance, Ulupono Initiative, WSP.

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PHOTOS



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



Ben Sullivan owner of LeaHi Design



Christopher Wegner, MEMA

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.

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.

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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

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.

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.”

The HEC 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. and Canada, Asia-Pacific, and more.

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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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