



Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute Research Highlights

Energy Policy & Analysis Hawai'i Energy Policy Forum

OBJECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANCE: Through this project, HNEI supports and manages the Hawai'i Energy Policy Forum (HEPF) in its mission to advance Hawai'i's energy transition through energy stakeholder engagement in fact finding, analysis, information sharing, and advocacy that enables informed decisions.

BACKGROUND: The HEPF was established in 2002 by the University of Hawai'i's College of Social Sciences (CSS) Public Policies Center (PPC) as a collaborative energy planning and policy group consisting of Hawai'i's electric utilities, oil and synthetic 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 commissioned studies, reports, and briefings to raise the level of dialog concerning energy issues for legislators and the general public.

The Forum has, in past years, sponsored and organized Legislative Briefings 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. Among its members, HEPF has more than 75 representatives from the electric utilities, oil and natural gas suppliers, environmental and community groups, renewable energy industry, academia, and federal, state and local government all working together to seek smart energy solutions to sustain a healthy prosperous, and secure Hawai'i.

The Forum's mission is to share ideas and information, recommend and advocate policies and initiatives, and promote civic action to achieve a clean and sustainable energy future for Hawai'i. To this end, it conducts research, briefings, forums for informative and deliberative dialogue and policy development, annual legislative briefings, and outreach and public education. HEPF also produces the biweekly "[Hawai'i: State of Clean Energy](#)" production, streamed on ThinkTech Hawai'i (<https://thinktechhawaii.com/>), and made available on the HEPF website.

PROJECT STATUS/RESULTS: In 2021, the CSS PPC was eliminated by the University of Hawai'i and management of the HEPF program was assumed by HNEI. HEPF held the 2022 Legislative Briefing on Friday, January 28th. The theme of the Legislative Briefing was focused on gaps in Hawai'i's energy infrastructure and how the \$1.2 billion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act signed by President Biden on November 15, 2021 could be used to address the most vulnerable aspects of that infrastructure.

In 2022, the HEPF took the following actions:

- Creation of online informational resources for members and the public focusing on compilation of the significant new federal policies related to energy which includes a description of the policy, policy type, relevant sector, funding opportunities, and managing agency. Initially, this featured the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and later included the Inflation Reduction Act; and
- Formation of Committees on Port Resilience, Geothermal Energy, and Recycling of Clean Energy Materials to explore how investments in renewable microgrids, firm renewable energy, and PV and battery energy storage system recycling could improve island community resilience and Hawai'i's economy.

HEPF held the 2023 Legislative Briefing ("Briefing") on January 12 at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus. The Briefing's theme "Strategic Alliances for Decarbonization and Energy Self Sufficiency". focused on gaps in Hawai'i's energy infrastructure and how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act could be used to address the most vulnerable aspects of that infrastructure. This event also celebrated the HEPF's 20th anniversary.

The U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy David Turk presented the Keynote Address – affirming the strength of our historic partnership with the Department of Energy and introducing a panel discussion with the newly inaugurated Governor of Hawai'i, Josh Green. This was followed by a full day of panel discussions and briefings. The Briefing also concluded Climate Week, a collaboration organized by HEPF and the State of Hawai'i's Climate Change and Adaptation Commission. Following the final

panel discussion, the participants proceeded to Washington Place for a 20th anniversary reception hosted by the Governor and First Lady. Video of the Briefing and its agenda can be found at <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/hepf/index.php/elementor-homepage/2023-legislative-briefing/>.

In response to the critical needs addressed during the Briefing, HEPF created an [online informational resource](#) for members and the public focusing on compilation of the significant new federal policies related to energy which includes a description of the policy, policy type, relevant sector, funding opportunities, and managing agency. Initially, this featured the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and later included the Inflation Reduction Act.

With the departure of a key member of HNEI's faculty who managed the HEPF activities through the 2023 legislative briefing, the HEPF is again at a decision point. The HNEI is committed to the success of the HEPF and expects to expand support staff in the near future.



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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA

Funding Source: Energy Systems Development
Special Fund

Contact: Richard Rocheleau, rochelea@hawaii.edu;
Adam Strubeck, strubeck@hawaii.edu;
Mitch Ewan, ewan@hawaii.edu

Last Updated: November 2023