



**Hawaiian  
Electric**



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Hawaii's first two community-owned and -designed solar projects coming to Molokai**

*Next step - proposals to be submitted to Public Utilities Commission*

**MOLOKAI, Jan. 12, 2023** – Hawaiian Electric and Hoahu Energy Cooperative Molokai are moving ahead with the state's first two community-owned and -designed solar plus battery projects. These projects could meet over 20% of Molokai's energy needs and serve an estimated 1,500 households on the island. The Hoahu Community-Based Renewable Energy Projects, Palaau Solar and Kualapuu Solar, will be the first on the island to offer the shared solar program (also known as community-based renewable energy or CBRE) to help lower the electric bills of customers on Molokai who are unable to install privately-owned rooftop solar.

After the completion of a competitive bidding evaluation process, which accounted for the cost of the projects as well as non-price factors including community outreach, Hoahu and Hawaiian Electric entered into negotiations. Once negotiations of the 20-year contracts are finalized, Hawaiian Electric and Hoahu will submit the two applications for approval by the Public Utilities Commission.

Hoahu Energy Cooperative Molokai is a volunteer, grassroots nonprofit organization formed in 2020 by Molokai community advocates to enable island residents to design and own renewable energy projects built on Molokai.

Committed to energy democracy, Hoahu spent three years hosting over 40 public workshops for Molokai residents to co-design the community solar projects, from site prospecting and subscriber benefit design to contractor interviews and analyzing various battery energy storage systems.

Palaau Solar could provide up to 2.2 megawatts of solar energy paired with a 10.1 megawatt-hour battery energy storage system. The project will be sited on property owned by Hawaiian Electric, adjacent to the company's Palaau Baseyard.

Kualapuu Solar could provide up to 0.250 MW paired with a 1 MWh battery. The project will be located at the Kualapuu Park and Community Center with the project's solar array mounted on carport structures over the existing parking lot.

"These two projects are the right thing to do for Hawaii and our planet," said Todd Yamashita, Hoahu's president. "It will provide access to renewables for those who need it most. Molokai renters are left out and can't install solar panels. Community solar says, 'Let us build a solar farm for you out in the field, and the energy we make and the profit we make will be credited directly on your bill and the bill of other members of the energy cooperative.'"

**-more-**

After the Hoahu projects are approved and available on Hawaiian Electric's [CBRE Portal](#), Molokai customers may become "subscribers" to one of the facilities. Once the projects are built and online, the subscribers receive credits on their monthly electricity bill based on their level of participation.

"We are looking forward to working more with Hoahu Energy Cooperative Molokai and their partners to bring these community-based shared solar projects online," said Rebecca Dayhuff Matsushima, vice president of resource procurement for Hawaiian Electric. "The two projects can help our Molokai customers bring down their energy bills and further reduces our carbon footprint in generating power to meet the energy needs of the island."

In November 2021, the request for proposals was opened for developers, companies, organizations or groups to become a "subscriber organization" of shared solar projects for Molokai customers. The two Molokai shared solar projects are expected to be online in mid-2025.

"When Act 100 was passed in 2015 the intent was to ensure that the benefits of renewable energy generation were made more accessible to a greater number of residents who would otherwise be unable to directly participate in renewable energy production. The CBRE program does just that and I am proud my home community of Molokai has the opportunity to participate through the Hoahu Energy Cooperative," said Sen. Lynn DeCoite. "These projects are promising steps towards our renewable energy future on the friendly isle."

Hoahu enlisted the support of Shake Energy Collaborative, a Honolulu-based, women-owned public benefit corporation, to facilitate the community-led design and development of the projects. Hoahu also selected Maui-based benefit corporation Mana Pacific to support the projects' technical development. Many contractors and partners also contribute to the success of the cooperative including the Kohala Center, Morikawa and Associates, Bright Future Consulting, Orrick, X Utility, and Arizona State University.

Hoahu's community ownership is made possible through the support of mission-aligned funding partners including The People's Solar Energy Fund, Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority, Inclusive Prosperity Capital, Ulupono Initiative, all of whom provided funds or letters of intent to the project.

For more information about the Hoahu projects, go to [hoahuenergy.coop/cbre](https://hoahuenergy.coop/cbre). For more information on Hawaiian Electric's shared solar program, go to [hawaiianelectric.com/sharedsolar](https://hawaiianelectric.com/sharedsolar) and [communityenergyhawaii.com](https://communityenergyhawaii.com).

Hoahu would also like to thank Sierra Club of Hawai'i, Earthjustice, Rep. Mahina Poepoe, United States Sen. Brian Schatz, United States Sen. Mazie Hirono, Councilwoman Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Senator Lynn DeCoite, Molokai Clean Energy Hui, Sustainable Molokai, Aina Momona, and Life of the Land.

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