

Waiau Repower Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you proposing to repower Waiau Power Plant, why not just retire it?

Hawaiian Electric has an obligation to provide reliable electric power to our customers, a responsibility that no other developer is responsible or required to perform. We also must increase renewable energy production and lower our carbon emissions. This includes replacing aging generators with lower emitting units that can run fewer hours and offer the services our O'ahu electric grid needs in the transition to 100% renewable energy. By repowering Waiau, we can leverage the existing infrastructure and replace old technology with smaller, more efficient, flexible and multi-fuel capable units that can fill the gaps when renewable energy production is unavailable or unable to meet system demand.

Is this project going to happen soon?

No, our proposal is the first step in what's called a competitive bidding energy procurement process that began in January 2023. At that time, Hawaiian Electric's Request for Proposal Team issued an RFP for variable renewable and firm renewable generation. Bids by Hawaiian Electric's Development Team and other generation project developers were submitted in April 2023. The bids were evaluated by Hawaiian Electric's RFP team overseen by an Independent Observer hired by the Public Utilities Commission. Final award selection was announced on Dec. 1, 2023. Our project was among the selected finalists and will still require PUC approval. We anticipate the first phase of our project to be in service around Q4 2029 with two other phases to follow.

Please explain why Hawaiian Electric is bidding into its own RFP?

Under the rules of the Competitive Bidding Framework issued by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Hawaiian Electric can propose "development team" projects to meet the generation and/or capacity needs issued in the RFP, as long as the Company complies with a strict Code of Conduct approved by the PUC. The PUC has chosen an Independent Observer to ensure that the Code of Conduct is followed, and that all proposals are treated fairly and equitably.

Why did you announce your project in May if you weren't yet selected?

We announced our proposal before the Final Award selection to broaden our community and stakeholder discussions as early as possible and facilitate the greatest level of transparency and flexibility for engagement and input.

Will the new units burn fossil fuels?

The RFP specifies renewable firm generation. The project we are proposing can run on biodiesel or use ultra-low sulfur diesel. With some modifications, the units also can run on hydrogen if it becomes commercially viable. The new generators can use different fuels which provides cost benefits to O'ahu customers as Hawaiian Electric makes no profit on fuels; any savings are passed to our customers.

What are some of the (technical) benefits of repowering Waiau?

The key benefit of the project is to provide firm, reliable, power that can be quickly dispatched to support variable renewable sources such as solar and wind on the electric grid.

In addition to its multi-fuel capability, the project proposes to leverage existing infrastructure to reduce costs and minimize community impact as there will be no new development around the property.

Because of its quick start and shut down capability, the new generators will operate fewer hours than the aging oil-fired boilers they will replace while helping stabilize the grid during peak demand periods. This means less curtailment of existing renewable resources and lower carbon emissions.

Of equal importance, the project will provide continued employment for full-time, on and off-site permanent employees supporting Hawaiian Electric’s Power Generation activities and create opportunities to hire local labor during the project construction.

What does “host community” mean?

The host community is the area (on O’ahu) that is most impacted by the development of a renewable energy project.

What is the community benefits package?

This annual funding to support community-based programs that address the identified needs and priorities of the host community is a requirement for developers bidding into Hawaiian Electric’s renewable energy procurement request for proposals. In consultation with the host community, proposers must specify the amount of funding, beneficiaries or nonprofit foundation to receive funds, and how funds will directly benefit community members.

What is Hawaiian Electric’s annual community benefit funding for the Waiau Repower project?

Hawaiian Electric commits to \$3,000 per megawatt, per year for the Waiau Repower Community Benefits Package.

What community programs will benefit?

Given the long lead time before the first phase of the project is expected in service, we anticipate community needs and priorities will change over time. As such, an advisory group of established community leaders will help oversee the community benefits package and determine future disbursements.

How were leaders selected for the Pearl City Advisory Group?

During our early community outreach, we contacted established community leaders in the Pearl City zip code and at the Pearl City Neighborhood Board for suggestions and recommendations on whom to invite to our initial sharing sessions. The current advisory group grew out of the initial discussion. In the future we plan expand the participants – including youth leadership – as they are identified by this group.

If I want to join the advisory group, what is the time commitment?

Membership in the community advisory group is on a volunteer basis and is not a permanent role. Participants can withdraw at any time if priorities or other demands take precedent.

What is the role of the advisory group?

This group will help inform and oversee the development of a community benefits package that is robust, thoughtful and meaningful. They will help assess community needs and priorities, identify appropriate beneficiaries and determine funding amounts over the life of the project.

How can I be kept updated on this project?

Please email pcdevelopment@hawaiianelectric.com to be added to a mailing list. Also, you may bookmark this webpage (hawaiianelectric.com/waiaurepower) in your browser and check back for more details about the project including area community meetings that you are invited to attend.