

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO CONVENE A
GEOTHERMAL ENERGY WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE REGULATORY
AND POLICY LANDSCAPE SURROUNDING GEOTHERMAL ENERGY IN
HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii has committed to achieving a one hundred
2 percent renewable energy portfolio standard by 2045 under
3 section 269-92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and has made
4 significant progress in the development of renewable energy
5 resources; and
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7 WHEREAS, however, the State remains heavily dependent on
8 imported fossil fuels, creating high energy costs and economic
9 vulnerability and increasing the urgency to accelerate the
10 development of local firm renewable energy resources; and
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12 WHEREAS, on January 29, 2025, the Governor issued an
13 executive order that recommits the State to its one hundred
14 percent renewable portfolio standard goal, while setting a new
15 goal to accelerate renewable energy for neighbor island
16 communities and directing state departments to streamline and
17 accelerate permitting to reduce energy costs and project
18 timelines; and
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20 WHEREAS, ninety-one percent of respondents in a statewide
21 public opinion survey on energy in Hawaii expressed their
22 support for the expansion of renewable energy resources
23 throughout the State, with the importance of developing Hawaii's
24 own energy resources emphasized by respondents across all
25 counties; and
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27 WHEREAS, geothermal energy provides a stable, firm, and
28 dispatchable source of renewable power, capable of supporting
29 grid stability and resilience while reducing dependence on
30 imported oil; and
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1 WHEREAS, Hawaii has substantial geothermal potential,
2 particularly on Hawaii Island, and there is growing interest in
3 responsibly developing community-led geothermal resources to
4 contribute to the State's clean energy goals and support
5 community development; and
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7 WHEREAS, despite its potential, geothermal energy in Hawaii
8 has been hindered by regulatory uncertainty, permitting
9 challenges, land use restrictions, and public concerns that
10 require careful consideration and engagement; and
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12 WHEREAS, a coordinated, transparent, and community-
13 inclusive process is essential to evaluating the role of
14 geothermal energy in Hawaii and identifying a clear development
15 pathway that aligns with state policy, environmental
16 stewardship, and cultural sensitivity; and
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18 WHEREAS, the Hawaii State Energy Office is the lead agency
19 for energy policy and planning and is well-positioned to convene
20 stakeholders and provide guidance on challenges and
21 opportunities relevant to geothermal energy technology; now,
22 therefore,
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24 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
25 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
26 that the Hawaii State Energy Office is requested to convene a
27 Geothermal Energy Working Group to evaluate the regulatory and
28 policy landscape surrounding geothermal energy in Hawaii; and
29

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
31 to consist of the following members:
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- 33 (1) The Chief Energy Officer, or the Chief Energy
34 Officer's designee, who is requested to serve as
35 chairperson of the working group;
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- 37 (2) The Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
38 Resources, or the Chairperson's designee;
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- 40 (3) The Director of Business, Economic Development, and
41 Tourism, or the Director's designee;
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- 1 (4) The Director of Health, or the Director's designee;
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- 3 (5) The Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, or
- 4 the Chairperson's designee;
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- 6 (6) The Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, or
- 7 the Chairperson's designee;
- 8
- 9 (7) A representative from the University of Hawaii
- 10 Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center;
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- 12 (8) A representative from the Department of Planning and
- 13 Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu;
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- 15 (9) A representative from the Planning Department of the
- 16 County of Maui;
- 17
- 18 (10) A representative from the Planning Department of the
- 19 County of Hawaii;
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- 21 (11) A representative from an electric utility;
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- 23 (12) A representative from the geothermal industry;
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- 25 (13) A representative from a non-governmental organization
- 26 with experience in energy policy; and
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- 28 (14) Other members, as invited by the chair; and
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
 31 to:

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- 33 (1) Identify key regulatory, policy, and permitting
- 34 challenges affecting geothermal energy in Hawaii;
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- 36 (2) Review best practices from other jurisdictions with
- 37 successful geothermal energy programs and consider
- 38 best practices of Pacific island countries such as New
- 39 Zealand;
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1 (3) Assess the potential for geothermal expansion and its
2 role in supporting energy resilience and
3 affordability; and
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5 (4) Provide recommendations to the Legislature and
6 Governor on policy and regulatory reforms necessary to
7 establish a clear and efficient pathway for geothermal
8 energy in Hawaii; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii State Energy Office
11 is requested to submit a report of its findings and
12 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
13 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
14 the Regular Session of 2026; and
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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
17 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Chief Energy Officer;
18 Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Director
19 of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Director of
20 Health; Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission;
21 Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission; Director of the
22 University of Hawaii Groundwater and Geothermal Resources
23 Center; Director of the Department of Planning and Permitting of
24 the City and County of Honolulu; Director of the Planning
25 Department of the County of Maui; and Planning Director of the
26 Planning Department of the County of Hawaii.
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OFFERED BY: 