
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

19
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

26
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
13 community-inclusive process is essential to evaluating the role
14 of geothermal energy in Hawaii and identifying a clear
15 development 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 Chairpersons of the Senate Standing Committee and
38 House of Representatives Standing Committee whose
39 subject matter purview includes energy, or their
40 designees;
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- 1 (3) The Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
2 Resources, or the Chairperson's designee;
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- 4 (4) The Director of Business, Economic Development, and
5 Tourism, or the Director's designee;
6
- 7 (5) The Director of Health, or the Director's designee;
8
- 9 (6) The Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, or
10 the Chairperson's designee;
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- 12 (7) The Executive Director of the Division of Consumer
13 Advocacy of the Department of Commerce and Consumer
14 Affairs, or the Executive Director's designee;
15
- 16 (8) The Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, or
17 the Chairperson's designee;
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- 19 (9) A representative from the University of Hawaii
20 Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center;
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- 22 (10) A representative from the Department of Planning and
23 Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu;
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- 25 (11) A representative from the Planning Department of the
26 County of Maui;
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- 28 (12) A representative from the Planning Department of the
29 County of Hawaii;
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- 31 (13) A representative from an electric utility, who is
32 requested to be invited by the chairperson of the
33 working group;
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- 35 (14) A representative from the geothermal industry, who is
36 requested to be invited by the chairperson of the
37 working group;
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- 39 (15) A representative from a non-governmental organization
40 with experience in energy policy, who is requested to
41 be invited by the chairperson of the working group;
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1 (16) A representative from the Native Hawaiian community,
2 who is requested to be invited by the chairperson of
3 the working group; and
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5 (17) Other members, as invited by the chairperson of the
6 working group; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
9 to:

10 (1) Identify key regulatory, policy, and permitting
11 challenges affecting geothermal energy in Hawaii;
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13 (2) Review best practices from other jurisdictions with
14 successful geothermal energy programs and consider
15 best practices of Pacific island countries such as New
16 Zealand;
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18 (3) Assess the potential for geothermal expansion and its
19 role in supporting energy resilience and
20 affordability; and
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22 (4) Provide recommendations to the Legislature and
23 Governor on policy and regulatory reforms necessary to
24 establish a clear and efficient pathway for geothermal
25 energy in Hawaii; and
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27

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii State Energy Office
29 is requested to submit a report of the working group's findings
30 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
31 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
32 the Regular Session of 2027; and
33

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Chief Energy Officer;
36 Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Director
37 of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Director of
38 Health; Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission;
39 Executive Director of the Division of Consumer Advocacy of the
40 Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Chairperson of the
41 Hawaiian Homes Commission; Director of the University of Hawaii
42 Groundwater and Geothermal Resources Center; Director of the



1 Department of Planning and Permitting of the City and County of
2 Honolulu; Director of the Planning Department of the County of
3 Maui; and Planning Director of the Planning Department of the
4 County of Hawaii.

