
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO A PROGRAM TO CHARACTERIZE THE POTENTIAL OF
UNDERGROUND ENERGY RESOURCES STATEWIDE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a better
2 understanding of carbon sequestration potential and the location
3 and temperature of underground water resources across the State
4 can provide multiple benefits to agriculture, clean energy, and
5 land use.

6 The legislature further finds that resource
7 characterization via slim-hole bores, which have a diameter of
8 seven inches or less for over ninety per cent of the depth of
9 the bore, can help identify geologic features associated with
10 clean energy resources. Environmental assessments should be
11 conducted before any energy projects are developed, with robust
12 and continued community engagement facilitated by unbiased
13 energy information.

14 At the same time, changes to federal funding for lifesaving
15 health care and nutrition assistance have placed short-term
16 constraints on state funds. Given these limitations, and



1 recognizing that significant investments are needed to determine
2 how geothermal energy can improve the lives of residents, this
3 Act provides more modest fiscal support for one or two
4 additional slim-hole characterization wells.

5 The purpose of this Act is to require the Hawaii state
6 energy office to continue supporting geothermal exploration
7 resource characterization via slim-hole characterization wells,
8 in collaboration with the Hawaii groundwater and geothermal
9 resources center at the university of Hawaii.

10 SECTION 2. Chapter 196, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately
12 designated and to read as follows:

13 **"§196- Underground energy resource characterization**
14 **program.** (a) There is established the underground energy
15 resource characterization program within the Hawaii state energy
16 office in collaboration with the Hawaii groundwater and
17 geothermal resources center at the university of Hawaii to
18 identify the location and characteristics of accessible
19 geothermal heat and carbon sequestration resources across the
20 State using the slim-hole boring method.



1 (b) Upon finding a resource that could support the
2 development of geothermal energy, the Hawaii state energy office
3 shall seek funds to conduct an environmental assessment or
4 environmental impact statement for the program's actions
5 pursuant to chapter 343. The assessment or impact statement
6 shall be conducted in collaboration with the appropriate state
7 agencies, including the department of land and natural resources
8 and department of health, and shall include input from Native
9 Hawaiian cultural practitioners.

10 (c) The Hawaii state energy office shall compile and share
11 information on the role of geothermal energy in achieving energy
12 self-sufficiency across the State. The information shall be
13 grounded in the context of commercially available technology and
14 address both opportunities and potential concerns, including
15 cultural, economic, and land use considerations.

16 (d) The Hawaii state energy office shall submit an annual
17 report to the legislature, no later than twenty days prior to
18 the convening of each regular session, on recent developments in
19 geothermal energy technology and activities in other states."

20 SECTION 3. The Hawaii state energy office shall submit a
21 progress report on the underground energy resource



1 characterization program to the legislature no later than twenty
2 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028. The
3 report shall be made available to the public in readily
4 accessible formats, including commonly used mapping software.

5 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the energy
6 security special fund the sum of \$ or so much thereof
7 as may be necessary for the fiscal year 2026-2027 to carry out
8 the purposes of this Act.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii state
10 energy office.

11 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

Hawaii State Energy Office; Water Resources; Geothermal Exploration; University of Hawaii; Reports; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the Underground Energy Resource Characterization Program to identify the location and characteristics of accessible geothermal heat and carbon sequestration resources through the use of slim-hole bores and requires a related environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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