

Docket No. 2022-0250

Equity Docket Opening Meeting Part 1 Energy Equity in Hawaii: A Community Discussion

March 1, 2023 5:30pm-7:30pm HST

Hybrid: PUC Hearing Room & Zoom (Virtual) Meeting

Presentations materials and recordings available on website: <https://puc.hawaii.gov/energy/equity/>

Welcome, Introductions and Objectives

- Opening remarks, staff and participant introductions, and overview of meeting objectives and agenda

NOTES

- Dean Harvest (Hawaii PUC Enforcement Officer) opened up the meeting with a proverb/Hawaiian blessing
- Commission staff began introductions, then circled around the room then onto the Zoom call for introductions.
- Approximately 25 attendees in room, and approximately 65 attendees on Zoom.
 - General messages from the Commissioners
 - Commissions across the country are dealing with equity concerns
 - Please participate fully, even those online
 - Tell your friends and family
 - How can we do this together?
 - Be frank and open, and respectful of each other
 - We will take everyone's input into consideration
- Meeting Objectives restated
 - Introduce Commission staff who will be working on this proceeding
 - Describe the role of the Commission and basics of the regulatory process to foster a shared understanding among participants
 - Solicit community feedback about energy equity considerations for input into Commission work
- Meeting Norms
 - Practice equity of time
 - Treat others with respect
 - Accept others lived experiences
 - Come ready to learn
 - Question your assumptions
 - Bike Rack
 - Modified Chatham – will tell the story of what happened in this room, but no attribution

PUC 101 and Context for Energy Equity in Hawaii

- Commission staff provided an overview of how the Commission functions, the Opening Order and the initial four areas of energy equity work the Commission has identified

NOTES

- PUC 101 (presentation available on website)
 - The PUC regulates the utilities and aims to align the needs of the utilities with public interest, in a way that benefits the public, ideally.
 - This regulation is conducted through a docketed process, and if you have the 8 digit number (first 4 are year docket opened, second 4 are a number assigned– YYYY-NNNN, i.e., for this Equity Docket the docket number is 2022-0250) then you can search all filed information in the PUC Docket Management System (DMS)
 - DMS site – dms.puc.hawaii.gov/dms/
 - Search by the 8-digit docket number
 - Most useful is the “documents” tab
 - Nice list of all documents in the docket record
 - Click on the PDF icon to pull up the document
 - Public and participants can also subscribe to the docket, go to main page of DMS, look at “Tools” box, click on Subscribe to Distribution List, then click on Dockets Filed, enter in both your email address and the Docket Number, you will get a confirmation email
 - 3 ways to get involved
 - Public comments (low commitment) – can file anytime, in any docket
 - Intervene (high commitment) – your rights are at stake, can begin with Motion to Intervene
 - Participation (medium commitment, also known as “limited participation”) – you have information that may help the Commission make a better decision, or are interested for a specific issue
 - If intervening or participating, you need to act quickly (20 calendar days after application filing or after last public hearing in a rate case)
 - Can submit filings through electronic process, or in person, or by mail
 - Interaction with Commission
 - For a procedural question, regarding time or step in the process, staff can answer
 - For a substantive issue, staff cannot answer privately – needs to be done publicly (through a docket filing)
 - Q&A
 - Q: how can a participant respond to a decision?
 - An intervenor can respond to decision
 - As a public commenter, one can file a comment
 - Q: how long does it take to respond to public comments
 - The PUC reviews and files public comments in the docket, but does not respond
 - The PUC will respond to an intervenor, usually as the second to last thing in a docket process (the last thing is an Order)
 - Timeline for a docket can take months, sometimes years
- Context for Energy Equity in Hawaii (presentation available on website)
 - Key terminology (shared understanding)

- Energy equity – goal of achieving social and economic participation in energy system (the Energy Equity Hui is working on Hawaii-specific definitions)
 - Vulnerable Populations – economically disadvantaged, certain racial/ethnic minorities (Native Hawaiians, elderly, rural, etc.)
 - Energy Burden – costs to individual/communities relating to energy
 - Tenets/Facets
 - Distributive equity – fair distribution of benefits/burdens
 - Procedural equity – inclusive, authentic engagement
 - Recognition justice – who is being ignored in decision making
 - Intergenerational justice
 - These definitions are being actively workshopped
 - What are the challenges
 - High energy rates, high percentage of low/moderate income persons
 - Burden
 - Lack of universal access to renewable energy initiative
 - Need for payment assistance
 - Siting / land constraints
 - Regulatory process
- 4 proposed pathways for equity docket
 - Pathway 1 – affordability measures and direct financial assistance
 - Rate discounts, credits, etc
 - Pathway 2 – equitable access to clean energy
 - i.e. rooftop solar (only certain populations)
 - looking at community benefits, and other solutions
 - Pathway 3 – utility business model reforms
 - Toolkit to elevate aspects
 - “can’t manage what you can’t measure”
 - Pathway 4 – procedural equity improvements
 - Streamlining/simplifying procedures
 - Improving the process
 - More streamlined education
 - What metrics the PUC might want to track to make things more accessible
 - Closing thoughts
 - A lot of these challenges will take time
 - Balance – between taking action (and implementing suggestions) – but also being mindful of time/bandwidth
 - **Q&A –**
 - What types of public outreach has been undertaken?
 - Within the equity hui, looking at a more comprehensive overview
 - Technical issue -can’t get on the call because of geographical restrictions
 - Because of pandemic issue, needed to set up safeguards
 - Will look at improving for next meeting
 - Requesting/planning to have meetings on neighbor islands

- In the Hui – are schools represented?
 - PUC comment: for the Hui – this has been a grass roots effort
- Comment: solar in April – now bill is skyrocketing
- Getting a capture from the online chat
 - Pathway 1 is an issue because of the for-profit private energy providers need to make profit especially the publicly traded companies. Thus the cost of energy is high and then the need to subsidize LMI.

BREAK

Community Discussion

- Interactive discussion with Commission staff to better understand participants’ background and interest in energy equity and identify how to engage those most impacted by energy equity challenges

NOTES

- Questions from PUC posed to the group:
 - What does a more equitable energy system look like?
 - Whose voices do you want in the room (who else should we be including in the conversation)?

INPUT FROM ATTENDEES

- From an in-room attendee
 - only 30% have renewable, the other 70% don’t have rooftop , or don’t qualify for the benefit
 - How do you support this 70%? -- they need the rebate for the heat pumps
 - Makes the cost of the investment, returnable
- What percentage of residents can subscribe to ANY program (DR, CSS+, etc) and what percent do not belong to anything?
- Would like to see energy burden more evenly distributed
 - on rates -- currently we have 3-4 commercial grades, only one residential grades, but many gradations
- One group not represented is affordable housing
 - No access to renewable infrastructure
- Rooftop solar, a lot of the benefits have been cut back on the NEM program, with solar becoming more affordable, one way to bring more equity – and flip this – allow more benefits – and rollback the more affluent customers that came early
- Include young people

Question from the PUC: “What brought you into the room today?”

- What brought him here was the TOU rate –customers are not aware of the impact – a 1-2-3 ratio –does everyone really have an ability to shift into lower rate areas? Concerns about that order – would like to see the PUC reconsider some aspects of this order

- (online participant) – more equity would be more corporations paying a higher percentage and developing green programs – the rates for rural should be reopened – also native Hawaiian – plants in the backyard – and echo in having the youth included on
- Having the hard discussions around the community benefits. Getting serious about “hard no’s.” If this doesn’t work, rather than the economics of communities, let’s start getting creative.
 - Molokai is a good example of this – co-creation
- Kuhuku Community negative aspects – a way to consider consumption in rural vs. urban: ordering a meal – paying half for the bill and only having the salad
- (online) – the utility co & PUC treating vulnerable communities differently (autonomy) – when it comes to building, giving the community more decision making power, giving them party intervention. These vulnerable communities are already at a disadvantage, relative to Hawaii Kai/Kailua – We need specific language, and in RFPs – specific language, to give an advantage in planning/building these projects.
- What can they do for keiki/children/next generation, when they reach 25 years old, one generation from now. When you run into solar, they have no voices.
- More equitable system – what does it look like 25 years from now?
- The concept of Hawaii is about present as well as the future, and also to care for each other – we always allow kupuna and keiki to go first, Kamehameha taught us that These are are people you have to look to. Also – personal experience, my electric bill has gone from 250/mo up to 800/mo.
- Kuhuku – last time we were here was in 2019 – nice to see the PUC open to have this discussion –
 - Go to that elementary school in Kuhuku and ask – is it okay what we are doing?
 - We are looking at the biggest transition – what about the people that worked those plantations/that want to work it again – agriculture – then let them have an ownership stake.
 - Let’s keep these PPAs in the community
- Concept of community ownership – process in a community-owned way, how this docket supports community owned, community led – currently it’s a pretty corporate space – communities don’t have the bandwidth/time/resources – but they have the heart
- There is sense of urgency to create these solutions, frightful that these are being bulldozed, without input.
 - In Hawaii– there is concern about land, even if not a focus on rates.
 - Excited to see more collaboration / technical understanding
 - Part of the Molokai Comm Resilience Action Plan – strength is the level of collaboration – “we just want the lowest cost” isn’t always the priority – but how much more they pay is an investigation that is required for
- Thank the PUC and the Staff for having really sought to reach out to the community – and to simplify this enormously complex issue – it takes time – a process to educate the community – it will take time.
- Waianae – underserved communities – been working on this about a year and a half – in Waianae – has no connectivity or very poor connectivity –maps aren’t accurate – the locals/town hall would hall – the information varies – not consistent – if this could be a central focal point – that would be a big help –the intent is great.
- Communities who bear the burden – lowering the cost for those that have to bear the burden – what does this look like in the long-term ? – a statistic: in North America, if we

move to renewable energy, infrastructure/land use would be size of Massachusetts – what does that mean for Oahu? To put it into a picture that people can understand lot of neighbors have interest – could get 15-20 to sign up – would be nice to know who to contact – incentivizing better. I.e., the battery buyback program – 6 contractors are talking to him – 3 say it's worth it, 3 say it's not – need consistency.

- The #1 thing to mention – is to echo folks – keiki // the unborn generations, the coral reefs all dying in next 20 years, serious problems with beaches – food supply – how do we invite the generations not even being born – it's hard to do this.
- From Molokai: great to have a woman's voice in a mix – she generational Molokai, and on Maui Co Council – and is the on the Energy Committee – work that they are doing on – accountability – special to home, not wanted to – head of HECO made \$5M a year for years, this is inequity
- Appreciate all the comments – we need to find balance – renewable energy is good, how to not place an undue burden – big believer in that you can make the best decisions if you hear from folks – similar to PBR – no right answer– give/takes and the tradeoffs – excited to hear from the group
- A capture from the chat: “perhaps relatively small condominium associations which don't have much access to their own solar and which don't have much expertise in planning for a new more sustainable world should be provided assistance to help plan their systems to meet the need.”

Wrap Up and Review Upcoming Meetings and Resources

- Commission staff provided preview of next opening conference meeting and gave overview of useful background materials, including docket website

NOTES

- General comments from the Commission Staff to attendees
 - This is just the beginning
 - The next meeting will be a week from today, in the daytime, 10am here in the hearing room
 - Will get into more depth – and start planning out to move forward
 - If you know how to get young people involved – please get them here
 - themes of affordability, siting, community engagement/education, we want to be thoughtful about how to move forward in this proceeding
- Brief overview of resources
 - Energy Equity website / landing page on PUC site:
<https://puc.hawaii.gov/energy/equity/>
 - Plus – H.R. No 43 & PUC Order 38759
- Final Comments from Commissioners:
 - Commissioner Kuwaye -- really appreciate the very good comments, honest comments – glad to hear it now – looking for common solutions, through difficult problems.
 - Commissioner Yost – a theme: the value of information sharing. values, priorities, how to make decisions. Establishing a basic foundation, hard for folks to participate. This is a dramatic step forward and outreach to a broader group of people. As we learn from each other, perhaps less polarized. if there is

enough time, we can learn. It's a great start tonight – openness, hope this will continue.

- Chair Asuncion – also a thank you – shout out to the DURPIE – getting the community – there is a give/take in anything we do – not always going to get it perfect – in equity, won't get it perfect – it's a continual thing – we'll get to a point – this is dear to his heart, are we going to pave our whole island with solar? – we don't have space – no burdens – we're the regulators, not the planners – other offices are involved on the planning – is their input at that stage – let's look at the RFP process – is the community being included? Welcome input – send the comments. We hope we can count on your participation.

In-person Talk Story

- Opportunity after the meeting to engage in casual conversation with Commission staff
- Online survey
 - Are you comfortable with recording the sessions?
 - What worked well about this meeting?
 - What would you change for future meetings?