



# HELCO NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Hawaii Electric Light Company announces plans to expand geothermal energy on Hawaii Island**

(Hilo, Hawaii) Hawaii Electric Light Company (HELCO) will soon take steps to expand geothermal energy on Hawaii Island with a request to the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to open a docket for a Geothermal Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2012.

At the same time, HELCO will undertake technical studies on the integration of additional geothermal resources on the Big Island grid. These include the need for more transmission lines if the geothermal power is all from the east side of the island and the potential for placing into standby one or more fossil fuel units when the geothermal power is operational.

HELCO will seek geothermal technologies that provide firm, fully dispatchable capability, that is, the ability for the utility to schedule and control the output power from the geothermal plant. This will help maintain reliability and at the same time help to manage intermittent resources such as wind and solar photovoltaic power. HELCO hopes to add up to 50 megawatts (MW) more of geothermal power if the cost is lower for customers. The amount added must also operationally blend with other power resources, including renewable energy from other sources such as wind, solar, biomass and hydro.

In June 2011, HELCO issued a Request for Information (RFI) to determine the best way to pursue geothermal development on Hawaii Island. HELCO sought input from stakeholders including potential geothermal developers, interested landowners and others on next steps that take into account Hawaii's renewable energy goals and clean energy policy in keeping with the state's unique community, cultural, historical, and environmental context. The company received 20 responses to the request for information.

"This response was a welcome showing of serious interest as we work toward adding more geothermal energy on Hawaii Island," said Jay Ignacio, HELCO president. "After reviewing the responses and discussions with respondents, we now plan to move forward to add more geothermal energy to our already considerable portfolio of renewable energy resources."

More than 30 percent of electricity on Hawaii Island is already generated from renewable resources, including hydro, wind, distributed solar photovoltaic, concentrating solar and geothermal. Puna Geothermal Venture, a subsidiary of Ormat Technologies, operates a 38 megawatt (MW) capacity geothermal plant in East Hawaii, including the addition of 8 MW recently approved by the Public Utilities Commission.

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