



Hawaiian Electric
Maui Electric
Hawai'i Electric Light



As 5,000th EV is registered in Hawai'i, Drive Electric Hawai'i is formed to promote electric transportation for a clean energy future

HONOLULU Dec. 20, 2016 – Eight key organizations have agreed to collaborate on electrification of ground transportation in Hawai'i as an essential part of achieving the state's clean energy goals.

Drive Electric Hawai'i seeks to accelerate adoption of electric vehicles through coordinated collaboration, and to make it easier to expand vehicle-charging infrastructure in a way that brings more renewable energy onto the electric grid.

The new organization's launch coincides with registration of the 5,000th electric vehicle in Hawai'i.

Founding participants who have signed a Memorandum of Understanding are: Blue Planet Foundation; Hawai'i State Department of Transportation (HDOT); Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT); Hawai'i State Division of Consumer Advocacy; the Hawaiian Electric Companies (including Maui Electric and Hawai'i Electric Light); Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative; Rocky Mountain Institute; and Ulupono Initiative. Other agencies and organizations are expected to join as the initiative moves forward.

"The primary focus of the Drive Electric Hawai'i Initiative is to accelerate the cost-effective electrification of transportation in all passenger vehicles, public transit vehicles, and fleet vehicles..." the memorandum states. "This effort will play a meaningful part toward the Hawai'i Clean Energy Initiative objective of increasing energy security and self-sufficiency by eliminating Hawai'i's dependence on imported fuels for both electricity and ground transportation."

Hawai'i is second in the nation (after California) in per capita electric vehicle registrations and a leader in charging facilities. Despite low gasoline prices, plug-in passenger vehicles registered in the state increased 26 percent last year. At the same time, gasoline and diesel vehicle registrations fell by 4 percent and 3 percent respectively.

"We are in the midst of a massive transformation," said Richard Wallsgrave of Blue Planet Foundation. "Electric vehicles can use renewable energy, enabling us to drastically reduce our state's carbon pollution. At the same time, electric vehicles can help to lower the cost of energy for everyone. This can be a true win-win."

With over one million vehicles registered in the state, Wallsgrove said, "Reaching 5,000 electric vehicles is an early milestone. But every great journey starts with one step. The goal of Drive Electric Hawai'i is to accelerate this progress, reaching our clean energy goals faster, together."

"Being able to offer EV users power that is generated from renewable sources is a high priority for us at Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative. At 36 percent, we are well on our way to reaching – and exceeding - our goal of 50 percent renewables by 2023," said David Bissell, KIUC president and CEO.

The initiative grew out of Rocky Mountain Institute's eLab Accelerator initiative – "a boot camp for electricity innovation"– where earlier this year Blue Planet Foundation, Hawaiian Electric, Ulupono Initiative, and other Hawai'i representatives brainstormed ways get more electric vehicles deployed and successfully integrated into the grid. Colorado-based RMI is an independent, global non-profit organization dedicated to sustainability, with a focus on market-based innovations for energy and resource efficiency.

"We think smartly integrated electric vehicles could be a boon -- not a burden -- for a Hawai'i grid that is increasingly renewable, and Drive Electric Hawai'i will help all stakeholders consider how to approach EV integration holistically," said Jesse Morris, a principal at Rocky Mountain Institute focused on enabling the integration of distributed energy resources like EVs.

The Drive Electric Hawai'i shared vision includes:

- Building a broad coalition in support of renewable transportation
- Encouraging use of electric vehicles
- Increasing electric vehicle charging opportunities that support 100 percent renewable energy
- Developing policies, regulations and laws to unlock the full value of electrified transportation

"The memorandum reinforces much of the ongoing work being done at DBEDT and elsewhere to improve the synergies between the electricity and transportation sector," said DBEDT Director Luis P. Salaveria. "We are grateful for the leadership taken by energy and transportation stakeholders in advancing this very important piece of our clean energy transformation."

"Drive Electric Hawai'i is a great opportunity for the public, private and nonprofit sectors to collaborate on accelerating Hawai'i's bold energy and transportation goals," said Greg Gaug, vice president of investments for the local impact investment firm Ulupono Initiative. "As part of our energy system strategy, we look forward to working with the state, utilities, and transportation and energy stakeholders to get more EVs on our roads."

"Many individuals, organizations and agencies must work together to achieve a clean transportation energy future. No one can do it alone," said Shelee Kimura, Hawaiian Electric vice president for corporate planning and business development. "We believe that, along with renewable generation of electricity, transportation electrification can help us achieve stable, reliable and lower-cost service for all our customers,"

With signing of the memorandum, participants will begin to establish a work plan and initiatives to move forward.

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