

# CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & CONSUMER AFFAIRS**  
**DIVISION OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY**



## Executive Director's Message

By: Dean Nishina



Many events of the last several years have reminded us of the vital importance of a reliable and affordable energy supply. It takes creative, dedicated, and technological expertise to navigate the constant changes happening in the regulated transportation and utility industries.

The Division of Consumer Advocacy is led by the executive director and includes a modest staff comprised of attorneys, accountants, economists, engineers, an education specialist, analysts, and support staff. Our team emphasizes keeping rates low while ensuring that the utility provides safe, reliable, and adequate service to consumers.

Public input helps us understand the consumer's perspective on utility services and rates. Keep reading to learn more about the upcoming virtual public hearing relating to the application of Launiupoko Irrigation Co. Also highlighted is terminology that will help decode your power bill, information on Hawaiian Electric's final grid services draft request for proposals, the upcoming change to local calling, COVID utility assistance, and details on the Kilauea Irrigation asset transfer.

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### DISASTERS: PLAN AHEAD

There are many benefits to planning ahead for disasters. The most important benefits are staying safe and helping yourself and your community recover.

People and families that plan for emergencies will:

- Help keep people safe;
- Limit property damage;
- Know what to do during and after a disaster;
- Better manage their savings;
- Support community preparedness; and
- Help their community get back up and running after a disaster.

Visit <https://www.ready.gov/be-informed> for resources to help be prepared!



**us!**

[www.facebook.com/DCCAHawaii](https://www.facebook.com/DCCAHawaii)

## Decode Your Power Bill

Whether through email, an app or an envelope in the mail, most everyone that has electric service receives a bill, usually about every month. Having a solid understanding of the terminology can be an important first step to becoming an empowered energy consumer.

### Total Amount Due/Balance Due

The total dollar amount based on your usage, fees and services. This line item is usually accompanied with a due date when the payment must be processed.

### Kilowatt (kW)

A watt is a measure for electric power and a kilowatt (kW) is one thousand of those. So, a kilowatt is equal to 1,000 watts.

### Days Served

Billing period for which your electric meter was read and is usually 30 or 31 days. This may vary.

### Usage/Consumption

The difference between your previous and current meter readings is the electricity usage for the current billing period.

### Ways to Pay/Payment Plans/Options

Your power company may provide various ways to pay your bill, such as through an app, the mail or at an in-person location. Your power company may also offer payment plans if you're having difficulty paying your bill.

## COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT OF DISPATCHABLE AND RENEWABLE GENERATION

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) recently approved (with modifications) Hawaiian Electric Companies' Proposed Final Oahu Grid Services Request for Proposals (RFP) for grid services on the island of Oahu, filed on June 25, 2021. The RFP was approved by the PUC as part of Order No. 37893 on August 3, 2021 with modifications relating to the weighting of price and non-price criteria.

The total amount of Grid Services being solicited in the RFP is 60 MW on the island of Oahu. Proposals are being solicited in this RFP for aggregated grid services from customer-sited distributed energy resources. Proposed projects must be greater than 500 kW capability for each grid service bid.

While there is no preferred technology being sought, Hawaiian Electric will only consider proposals utilizing technologies that have successfully reached commercial operations in commercial applications. The resources that provide the Grid Services requested in the RFP must meet technical and business requirements as set forth in the RFP. Proposers may submit proposals that employ controllable customer loads, energy storage devices, and/or non-fossil generation amongst other technologies.

Based on the proposals received, results of the evaluation process, and the Independent Observer's oversight and review, Hawaiian Electric will then select a Final Award Group from which to begin contract negotiations. Multiple Proposals may be included in the Final Award Group. The amount of grid services Hawaiian Electric may acquire depends on, among other things, the quality of bids received in response to the RFP; economic comparison to other RFP responses; updates to Hawaiian Electric's forecasts; and changes to regulatory or legal requirements.

(Docket No. 2017-0352)



## Hawaiï Residents Will Need to Dial 808 for Local Calls Starting in October

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has adopted 988 as a new three-digit number to be used nationwide to reach the National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline starting July 16, 2022.

In order for 988 to work, service providers must implement mandatory 10-digit local dialing (in states where 988 is not used as a prefix, 10-digit local dialing is not mandated). Therefore, **starting October 24, 2021, local calls, including those on the same island, will require that you dial area code 808 + telephone number.** On and after that date, local calls dialed with only 7 digits may not be completed, and a recording will inform you that your call cannot be completed as dialed.

# KILAUEA IRRIGATION CO., INC. And THE MARY N. LUCAS TRUST For Approval of Asset Transfer and Surrender of CPCN

Kilauea Irrigation jointly requested approval by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of an asset sale involving a pipeline, appurtenances, easements, tools and equipment located in Kilauea, Kauai. Kilauea Irrigation is a private water company that owns a pipeline for the distribution of non-potable irrigation water fed by the Kaloko Reservoir to the Kilauea Farms Subdivision, Kilauea, Kauai, Hawaii.

Kilauea Irrigation is a Hawaii public utility regulated under Chapter 269, HRS, as of January 16, 1985. It has been non-operational for the last five years because the US Food and Drug Administration forbade US farmers from allowing any non-potable irrigation water to touch any edible portion of a crop. This was done in response to the numerous deadly Listeria outbreaks on the mainland caused by contaminated water on produce.

Most of Kilauea Irrigation's past customers were organic farmers. Without the farmers water use and payments, Kilauea Irrigation was unable to cover operational expenses including maintaining the Pipeline, repairing frequent ruptured pipelines and also maintaining and repairing the Kaloko Ditch that feeds Kaloko reservoir, which was Kilauea Irrigation's water source.

On July 9, 2021, the PUC approved the proposed sale and transfer of all of Kilauea Irrigation's assets. The buyer is Paul Richard Cassidy, Jr. and Carroll S. Taylor, successor co-trustees of the Mary N. Lucas Trust. The Trust owns over 950 acres around and including part of the Kaloko Reservoir, which feeds the Trust's own pipelines, and is entitled to the remaining half of the water in the Kaloko Reservoir. The Trust intends to buy all of Kilauea Irrigation's assets except their corporate identity and CPCN. It is stated that Kilauea Irrigation's "numerous easements" on the Trust's property are "particularly constraining on any future development" of the Trust's property. Purchase price for the assets is \$135,000.

(Docket No. 2021-0023)

## UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE



The Division of Consumer Advocacy wants to inform consumers of available programs for those who may be in need of financial assistance. Please note that, due to the high demand for assistance, programs may quickly reach capacity.

Visit the Division of Consumer Advocacy website for up to date COVID-19 utility bill assistance <https://cca.hawaii.gov/dca/covid-19-utility-assistance-programs/>.

## Launiupoko Irrigation Co., LLC, General Rate Increase Application

Launiupoko Irrigation is seeking approval of a general rate increase for non-potable (irrigation) water services in the Launiupoko area.

Launiupoko had been operating at a loss since 2019 due to a severe limitation of the primary non-potable water source, which they have no control over.

In order to increase its revenues and avert greater losses from operations so that they can continue to service its customers, Launiupoko applied in June 2020 for the Commission's authorization to temporarily and immediately increase its rates on non-potable water until an application for general rate increase has been approved. On December 30, 2021, Launiupoko filed its application for a general rate increase and a temporary rate increase was approved on July 19, 2021.

A virtual public hearing relating to the application for general rate increase will take place on September 13, 2021, at 5:30pm.

All interested persons are invited to attend the public hearing to state their views on the Application. Statements may also be e-mailed to the Public Utilities Commission to [Hawaii.PUC@hawaii.gov](mailto:Hawaii.PUC@hawaii.gov). All written statements should reference Docket No. 2020-0089.

Click [here](#) for meeting information including how to join.



## Upcoming Dates of Interest

- **September 13, 2021: Public Hearing** Launiupoko Irrigation Co., LLC, General Rate Increase
- **September 14 & 15, 2021: Evidentiary Hearing** Maui Electric Co. - Will be live-streamed via YouTube.
- **September 14, 2021: Zoom meeting to discuss the West Kaua'i Energy Project**

### MYTH NO. 4

Smart meters are hazardous, increasing the risk of fire and explosion.

## MYTHS VS. FACTS: THE TRUTH ABOUT SMART METERS

**TRUTH:** Smart meters must meet safety requirements and standards spelled out in the National Electric Safety Code (NESC).

**TRUTH:** Public service commissions require independent certification proving that smart meters are safe and show resistance to heat, fire, voltages, surges, and self-heating.

Companies that manufacture smart meters produce certifiably safe and reliable equipment. Nevertheless, smart meters should be installed and uninstalled only by trained professionals exercising standard safety precautions.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE MYTHS VS. FACTS

## Consumer Spotlight

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We also welcome feedback and story ideas. Email us at [dca@dcca.hawaii.gov](mailto:dca@dcca.hawaii.gov).

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