



CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & CONSUMER AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY (DCA)



A Message From the Consumer Advocate

Michael S. Angelo

As we approach the close of another year, it is hard not to marvel at how swiftly time has flown. This year we have faced unprecedented challenges, grappling with the aftermath of the

Maui wildfires that tested our resilience as a state. As we move forward, our office will be focused on advocating for utilities to take actions that protect customers against disasters

In this December Issue, we bid farewell to Dean Nishina, an invaluable member of our DCA family. His dedication to consumer advocacy over 30 years leaves an everlasting mark.

We delve into the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) equity and community engagement in the Energy Equity Docket 2022-0250. Your involvement in this proceeding is critical to ensuring that the outcomes address the broad needs of the community.

Additionally, we unravel the FTC's lighting fact labels on bulb packages, to help consumers make informed choices. We also discuss federal support for energy innovation, in Hawaii that supports our renewable future.

Lastly, we highlight the \$150 million Recovery Fund for Maui Wildfire Victims that is part of the One Ohana Initiative. To foster accelerated healing and unity within our community.

As we approach 2024, let us embrace resilience and hope, knowing that your involvement is pivotal in shaping a brighter energy future for all. From all of us at the DCA, we wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

Farewell Dean Nishina



Dean Nishina's departure marks the end of an extraordinary chapter in DCCA's history—a chapter embellished with 30 years of unwavering commitment, advocacy, and leadership. From his humble beginnings as an 89-day staff hire to his influential tenure at DCA which included multiple roles such as several stints as Executive Director. Dean's journey embodies resilience, dedication, and an unyielding passion for serving Hawaii's ratepayers. His fierce advocacy for ratepayer interest resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in savings to ratepayers, over the past 30 years.

As he embarks on this new chapter, we express profound gratitude for his impact and wish him endless joy in retirement. Dean's impact will continue to inspire us as we move forward, and he will be dearly missed as the guiding light of our DCA family.

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PUC's Bold Steps Towards Equity and Community Engagement: Your Input Matters!

Amidst Hawaii's journey towards achieving 100% renewable energy by 2045, community involvement stands as a pivotal factor. At DCA, we value your input as ratepayers and seek to understand your perspectives. As we grapple with the nation's highest electricity rates, the shift towards renewable energy demands a unified approach. In this context, docket 2022-0250 emerges as a crucial initiative, reflecting a commitment to engaging communities and delivering impactful outcomes.

What is Docket No. 2022-0250 all about?

This docket is about redefining the process of how energy decisions are made within regulated utility. The goal is to ensure that every voice is heard, and every community has a seat at the table. The DCA believes that building a brighter, more sustainable future requires more community input and inclusivity. For more information on how you can get involved visit puc.hawaii.gov/energy/equity/.

What are the next steps?

The PUC has recently outlined a plan to bolster community outreach and education efforts. In their recent **order number 40290**, they lay out the next steps for this docket. One of these being to improve community outreach and education, including seeking a local consultant's support to assist in developing an inclusive outreach plan. This approach includes specific goals, educational materials, tracking progress metrics, and a schedule of events and meetings across impacted communities. The Commission's goal is to gather diverse perspectives before developing it's final recommendations.

So, what does community engagement mean in this context?

Community engagement is crucial. Monthly meetings beginning October 2023 - January 2024 will be held, aimed at co-creating solutions for a more equitable energy future. These gatherings will focus on learning the RFP process, brainstorming improvements, and finalizing recommendations to drive impactful change. Find more information about the details of these upcoming meetings [here](#). Additionally, the Commission welcomes feedback and comments on their proposed efforts. They've set up a platform for public comments which you can access by clicking [here](#), and referencing Docket No. 2022-0250.

As we navigate the details of this docket and its implications, the active participation of our community remains paramount. Together, let's harness this momentum to drive swift, meaningful change towards a more sustainable and accessible energy future for all.

Shedding Light on Energy Efficiency



Putting up a few holiday decorations? Did you know that your holiday lighting choices could save you both energy and money?

Just like the trusty nutrition label on food, the Lighting Facts label on bulb packages guides consumers in making savvy choices. Mandated by the Federal Trade Commission, this label showcases key information:

- Brightness (in lumens)
- Estimated Yearly Energy Costs
- Lifespan
- Light Appearance (from warm to cool)
- Energy Usage (in watts)

This label isn't just a sticker - it's your passport to smarter shopping, helping you pick the perfect bulbs tailored to your needs. So, as you light up the holidays, let these facts brighten your path to energy-efficient choices!

Lighting Facts Per Bulb	
Brightness	820 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$7.23
<small>Based on 3 hrs/day, 11¢/kWh Cost depends on rates and use</small>	
Life	1.4 years
<small>Based on 3 hrs/day</small>	
Light Appearance	Warm ————— Cool
<small>2700 K</small>	
Energy Used	60 watts

Source: Federal Trade Commission, Lighting Facts, ftc.gov

For additional tips on how to save money during this holiday season check out [this site](#).

Federal Support for Hawaii's Energy Innovations - \$17.9 Million

Exciting news for Hawai'i's energy future! The U.S. Department of Energy is investing over \$17.9 million in innovative projects led by the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) and Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC). These projects aim to make our energy more reliable and cleaner by using new technology with our existing power sources. It's like giving our energy system a cool upgrade to bring more renewable energy, making it work better and saving money for families and businesses. This helps KIUC reach its goal of using 100% renewable energy in the next 10 years, making our island's energy more reliable and reducing our impact on the environment. These projects start in 2024 and will be finished around 2025, bringing us closer to a more sustainable and reliable energy future for everyone.

These investments represent a step toward a more reliable, cleaner, and cost-effective energy future. They aim to ensure that technological advancements translate into tangible benefits for consumers, including stable electricity rates and a more resilient energy system that benefits everyone. Read more about the projects [here](#).

Recovery Fund Set Up for Maui Wildfire Victims and Injured

In response to the August 2023 Maui wildfires, Governor Josh Green unveiled a substantial recovery fund exceeding \$150 million. Aimed at aiding affected families and individuals, this fund, part of the One 'Ohana Initiative, offers over \$1 million to participants opting in for quicker healing.

Partnerships with the State of Hawaii, Hawaiian Electric, Kamehameha Schools, and Maui County reflect collective support. Participants choosing this aid waive legal action on related claims. Governor Green's plan prioritizes community recovery, including legislative protections against increased costs, grid improvements, and climate response, aligning with local values.

This proactive recovery approach, mirroring past efforts post-catastrophic events, emphasizes unity and support within Hawaii's communities. Hawaiian Electric, in tandem with wildfire safety strategies, collaborates in this effort to fortify against future calamities.

Governor Green's address and the initiative's details can be found [here](#).

UTILITY ASSISTANCE

As we approach this season of giving, it's essential to ensure that everyone in our community stays warm and bright. If you or someone you know could use the support with utility bills, here are several assistance programs that may be available.

HECO'S PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

HECO offers interest free monthly installments with late fees waived. Find out more by visiting [HECO's website](#).

ENERGY CRISIS INTERVENTION (ECI)

The purpose of the ECI is to restore or prevent termination of electric or gas power. To learn more, visit [click here](#).

WATER CRISIS INTERVENTION (WCI)

The purpose of WCI is to restore or prevent termination of water or wastewater service. To learn more, click [here](#).

ALOHA UNITED WAY (AUW)

AUW 2-1-1 is a confidential, toll-free help hotline for anyone in Hawaii in need of help. To learn more, visit www.auw211.org

SALVATION ARMY

Their Basic Needs Program provides basic material assistance, short-term utility and rent, clothing, food assistance, and more. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

For more on eligibility and the application process, consider contacting these organizations directly or visiting their website. Let's ensure that everyone in our community accesses the essential services they deserve during this holiday season.

CELEBRATING A YEAR OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY

As we approach the close of the year, we take pride in the many strides made by our division. Active in 81 dockets during 2022-2023, our dedication has resulted in over 2.4 million dollars in consumer savings.



PARTICIPATED IN 81 DOCKETS



2.4 MILLION DOLLARS IN SAVINGS FOR CONSUMERS

At DCA, consumers are at the heart of every action we take. As we wrap up this year, we extend out heartfelt gratitude to our team whose hard work and dedication have made these accomplishments possible.

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- **December 25th - Christmas Day** (State offices will be closed)
- **January 1st - New Year's Day** (State offices will be closed)
- **January 25th - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day** (State offices will be closed)

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