

Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative hits 90% Renewable Milestone

Līhu'e, Kaua'i, HI – 2/3/16 – Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) used renewable resources to generate 90 percent of the island's electricity during four separate days in January.

Using a combination of solar, biomass and hydroelectricity, KIUC hit 90 percent renewable generation for brief periods on those four days.

No other utility in the U.S. has a higher percentage of large-scale solar on its grid than KIUC.

Germany, which has moved more quickly than any other industrialized nation to shift from nuclear and fossil fuels to renewables, reported that for one hour on Aug. 23, 2015, 83 percent of the electricity used during the day came from renewable resources.

“That a small co-op on Kaua'i can become a world and national leader in energy transformation in such a brief time is something all of our members can be proud of and celebrate,” said David Bissell, president and CEO of KIUC.

“In five years we've gone from being a place that's almost totally dependent on imported oil for power generation to a place that is an industry leader in its adoption of renewable energy,” he said.

In January, renewable resources met an average of 77 percent of Kaua'i's energy demand during the peak solar hours, spiking to 90 percent on four separate days. On a typical day, the renewable percentages break down like this:

- Solar 62%
- Biomass: 8%
- Hydroelectric: 7%

On an annual basis, renewable resources are now 38 percent of KIUC's fuel mix for generating electricity, up from 8 percent in 2010. The remaining 62 percent is oil, which fuels the bulk of Kaua'i's power generation from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m.

(more)

Key benefits of KIUC's renewable portfolio strategy include:

- 30% reduction in oil consumption from 2010 to 2016
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to well below the 1990 level

A major component of KIUC's energy transformation is the Green Energy Team biomass plant near Kōloa, which began delivering 6.7 megawatts of electricity to the grid in January.

The plant burns wood chips produced from several sources on Kaua'i, including invasive albizia cleared from public and private land.

Under a 20-year contract with KIUC, Green Energy will supply about 12 percent of Kaua'i's electricity annually.

KIUC's strategic plan calls for the cooperative to use renewable resources to generate at least 50 percent of its electricity by 2023. The cooperative is now on track to hit that target by 2019.

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