

Hawaii Bill Mandates 100% Renewable Energy by 2045, but Obstacles Remain

June 01, 2015 | Blog |

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In an **ambitious and unprecedented move**, Hawaii is aiming to increase its current renewable energy output of 21% to a 100% quota by 2045. The state, which carries some of the U.S.'s highest electricity costs, is riding the momentum of decreasing renewable energy prices. Legislators believe Hawaii's abundant sunshine, wind, ocean and tidal waves, and geothermal activity make it an ideal candidate for quitting fossil fuels. The bill's sponsor, Senator Mike Gabbard (D – West Oahu), **said** rather than continuing to spend up to \$5 billion annually on fossil fuels, "our islands are blessed with abundant, renewable energy...we should be using these resources for the benefit of our people."

The Hawaii plan would hinge, in large part, on improvements in energy storage technology. The state is looking into investing in more efficient batteries and an overhaul of its electric grid. Both signal a move toward a "smart grid" system that staggers energy production to meet usage demand. For example, recently, **SolarCity Corporation said** it will allow Hawaiians the combined option of rooftop photovoltaic panels and **Tesla Motors'** new Powerwall battery as a way to abandon the electric grid. As solar prices continue their decline, adding more efficient storage would result in per kilowatt-hour at parity with oil.

The bill passed in both legislative houses in early May and Governor David Ige has until the end of June to sign it.

Authors