

**PUBLIC COMMENT NEEDED  
FOR FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY  
ON HAWAII'S GEOTHERMAL PROJECT**

The U.S. Department of Energy has finally begun a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study process on the state's geothermal project. Official meetings for public comment on the scope of the EIS are taking place in March. Puna residents, Native Hawaiians, the Wao Kele O Puna rainforest, and all of Hawaii's tax-payers and ratepayers need your help. Please come and speak about your concerns regarding this industry and it's proposed transmission to Oahu.

**Oahu**

**Saturday March 14, 1992 on  
2pm-5pm and 7pm-10:30pm  
Roosevelt High School  
1120 Nehoa St.  
Honolulu, HI**

**Molokai**

**Thursday March 12, 1992  
2pm-5pm and 7pm-10:30pm  
Mitchell Pauole Center  
90 Ainoa St.  
Kaunakakai, HI**

**Background**

**Hawaii's 500MW Geothermal/Cable Project**

The Hawaii Geothermal Project ("the Project") is an immense four-phase development plan to build a complex of geothermal power plants on the slopes of Kilauea Volcano, and thereby generate electricity to be delivered by an inter-island cable system to Oahu. A 1990 DBEDT report advertises the Project as "A federal-state-private partnership leading toward commercialization." Its stated goal is to deliver at least 500 megawatts of energy for use on Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island. The phases of the project include: (1) the resource assessment program, which included the experimental HGP-A plant, (2) the deep-water cable project, (3) the resource characterization and verification program, and (4) construction of the commercial geothermal/cable system. This energy production would require drilling up to 200 wells to power up to 20 power plants. The interisland cable portion of the Project involves 100ft. towers feeding electricity to 3 underwater cables which would travel over 100 miles to Oahu with an overland pit-stop on Maui. The Project is recognized by law as the largest development project ever undertaken in Hawaii.

**Current Development: Phase III**

The state's Scientific Observation Hole program together with the current developments of True/Mid-Pacific Geothermal Venture and Puna Geothermal Venture compose phase 3 of this joint "state-federal-private" partnership. DBED claims that the total budget for this phase is \$50 million, with \$9 million from the State, \$15 from the U.S. Department of Energy, and \$26 million from the private geothermal developers currently working in the Kilauea East Rift Zone. This stage is considered the "final, critical phase" of the Project because the completion of up to 25 commercial-scale wells will clear the way for private construction of the full 500MW system.

**Victory in Federal Court**

In June 1991, the U.S. District Court (Judge David Ezra) ruled that the federal government was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act by participating in phase III without the completion of an "adequate federal EIS." All U.S. agencies are now prohibited from participating or assisting in the project and the U.S. Department of Energy plans to



undertake an EIS on geothermal development in Hawaii which should include alternatives to the entire project.

There has never been an official comprehensive and cumulative study on the impacts of geothermal development on Hawaii's forest, ocean and native culture. The Federal court has determined that the scale of environmental, social, and economic impacts of this project warrant an EIS.

### **Proposed Areas of Development for drilling, power plants, and transmission lines**

Big Island: Puna District including the Wao Kele O Puna rainforest, Poihiki, Kapoho, Hawaiian Homelands in Puna, Pohakuloa, and Kawaihae, Mahukona shore-line, Alenuihaha Channel

Maui: Haleakela SW Rift Zone, Ulupalakua Ranch, Kahukinui (Hawaiian Homelands) Ahihi, Kanaio, Huakini shore-lines, Auau Channel

Ohau: Kaiwi Channel, Waimanalo (Hawaiian Homelands), Aniani

### **Some of the Potential Environmental/Socioeconomic Impacts**

- Toxic air pollution from emissions of hydrogen sulfide, chlorides, radon, and heavy metals in steam condensate
- noise pollution
- coastal and groundwater pollution
- geologic hazards associated with drilling and underwater transfer on a live volcano
- rainforest destruction
- terrestrial and marine species extinction
- corral reef destruction
- oil spills from oil-lined cable
- electromagnetic radiation
- violation of Native Hawaiian religious and land rights
- destruction of ancient archaeological sites
- energy reliability problems, serious economic impacts on ratepayers and taxpayers

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

1. Testify in person and/or submit written testimony at the scoping meeting about your opinion of this geothermal development in general. This is an opportunity (no guarantees) for honest and objective research to be conducted on one of Hawaii's biggest environmental threats. Please comment and identify your concerns on significant environmental issues and the appropriate scope of this document. Your contribution helps all the groups that are fighting to stop this inappropriate energy pursuit.

2. If you speak for a group you get 10 minutes, if not your testimony is just as important but DOE only allows you 5 minutes during the hearing.

3. Written comments are not due until April 15, 1992, so please come to the hearing first and formalize your thoughts later.

4. For more information, copies of the DOE notice you can call:  
U.S Dept. of Energy office in Honolulu 541-2561

or contact: Annie Szvetcz, Hawaii (geothermal) Campaign Coordinator representing Rainforest Action Network, Greenpeace USA, and Pele Defense Fund  
803 Coolidge #3, Honolulu, HI 96826, 941-2402

*Mahalo*