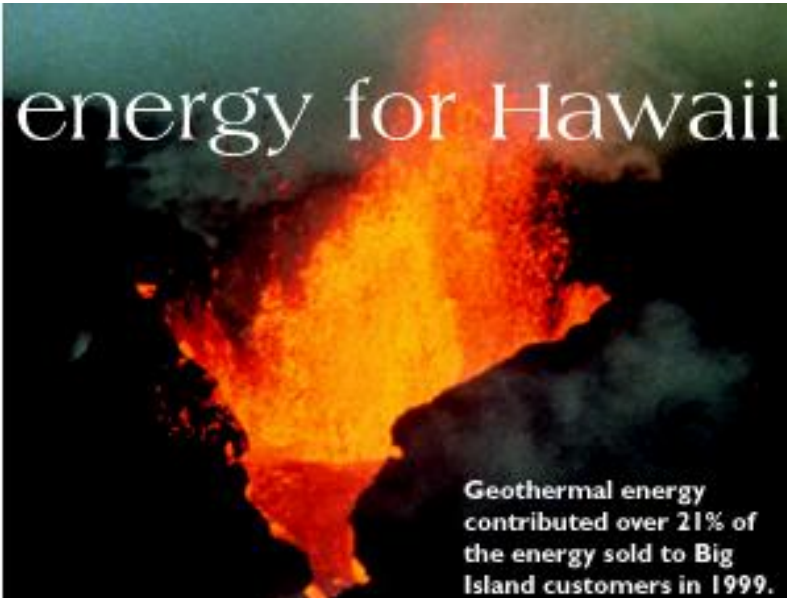




Leading the way Renewable

energy for Hawaii

October is Energy Month in Hawaii. What better time to focus on our state's energy track record?



Did you know...

Using sun, wind, geothermal and other resources, Hawaii is a national leader in the use of renewable energy.

• In 1999, about 28% of the electricity sold on the Big Island came from renewable sources.

• Hawaii outperforms the nation in supporting President Clinton's Million Solar Roofs Initiative, which aims to install one million solar systems by 2010. To date, over 80% of the Initiative's installed solar systems nationwide are in Hawaii, thanks to solar programs sponsored by HELCO and our affiliated companies, HECO and MECO.

• Our solar water heating program is **the largest in the country**. Since the program began in 1996, HELCO, HECO and MECO have paid out over \$12 million in rebates to help residents pay for over 12,000 solar water heating systems. Over the next five years, our program goal is to double the number of solar systems installed statewide, adding over 12,000 MORE.

Together these efforts are helping protect the environment and reducing Hawaii's use of oil. Our state does face some challenges in getting even more energy from renewable sources (see "What does it take to get more?"), but at HELCO we're committed to moving Hawaii in the right direction.

What can you do?

Here's how you can help Hawaii use more renewable energy:

• **Get your hot water from the sun!** Install a solar water heating system under our program. Not only will you use solar power, you can save up to 90% on your water heating costs. Take advantage of our program's rebates and the 35% state tax credit. For information on our rebate program, call **969-0127**.

• **Help more schools get Sun Power!** Sign up to support our *Sun Power for Schools* program. Thanks to contributions from us and our customers, Kealahou and Hilo High Schools now have solar electric systems operating on their campuses. We'd like to see every Big Island school get one. Your contributions can help make this a reality! To sign up or get more information, call **969-0137**.



What does it take to get more?

At HELCO, we're committed to helping customers use more renewable energy that's reliable and reasonably priced. Not all renewable sources meet this test. Here are some of the challenges we face:

Availability. Except for geothermal and biomass, many renewable sources aren't available on demand. "As available" sources like solar and wind still need back-up generation or energy storage systems to ensure power is available when customers need it — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Variability. The variability in strength and direction of wind can affect the quality of power produced. An electrical grid is only able to accept so much inconsistent power before the overall quality of power may be affected.

Higher cost and lots of land. The cost to generate electricity from some renewable sources is still more expensive than from fossil fuel sources like oil. Large scale renewable energy facilities may need a lot of acreage, which can also increase costs.

Environmental effects. Some renewable energy sources have environmental impacts of their own, such as noise and visual impacts of large wind turbines.

Though there are currently some drawbacks to using renewable energy sources, there are also many benefits. Our solar electric and renewable energy programs are contributing to national research efforts to improve renewable energy technology and HELCO continues to use renewable energy sources whenever possible.



Interim rate increase

Effective September 1, the PUC approved an overall interim electric rate increase of 1.9%. The increase means that a residential household using 500 kilowatt-hours a month will see its monthly electric bill increase by about \$2.50.

The increase is part of HELCO's 9% rate increase request, which is primarily to help pay for the cost of buying needed power from independent power producers. Recently, HELCO began buying 22 megawatts of power from Hamakua Energy Partners' new plant in Hamakua. We also signed a contract to continue buying power from Hilo Coast Power Company (HCPC). In addition, the requested increase will help pay for other improvements including upgrades to the transmission line from Waimea to Honokaa, which is needed to carry the power purchased from Hamakua.

The PUC will later issue a final decision on the rate increase request and may adjust the final amount up or down.



What is "IRP Cost Recovery" and why is it increasing?

There's a line item on your electric bill labeled "IRP Cost Recovery." Ever wonder what that is? IRP stands for "Integrated Resource Planning," HELCO's long-term energy planning process. Working with outside experts and with an advisory group of representatives from government, businesses, and the community, HELCO follows a very detailed process to determine the Big Island's long-term energy needs and a plan for the best way to meet those needs at a reasonable cost to you, our customers.

The "IRP Cost Recovery" surcharge is used to recover the costs of this planning process and related energy efficiency programs. The costs are only passed on once the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) reviews and approves them. Recently, the PUC approved IRP general planning costs for the years 1995-1999. As a result, you will see an increase in the "IRP Cost Recovery" line on your bill. For example, a Big Island residential customer using 500 kilowatt-hours will see an increase of \$1.24 a month.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Vegetarian Lasagna

- 1 block (20 oz.) firm tofu
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 jar (32 oz.) prepared spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 lb. frozen cut leaf spinach, thawed and drained
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning, optional
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pkg. (12 oz.) lasagna noodles
- 4 cups shredded low-fat cheese (Monterey/cheddar blend)
- 3/4 cup low-fat ricotta cheese



Place tofu in a cheese cloth; squeeze to remove excess liquid. In a saucepan, heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil and brown tofu. Add garlic and onion and cook until onion is clear. Add spaghetti sauce, water, spinach, and seasonings; simmer for 10 minutes. Oil bottom and sides of a 13 x 9-inch pan with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil. Layer uncooked noodles, sauce mixture, and shredded cheese. Repeat layers; spread ricotta cheese over top layer. Cover and bake in electric oven at 350°F for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 more minutes. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

