



**Hawaiian  
Electric**

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Regulators approve 5-year grid resilience plan**

- *Wildfire safety actions key element of program*
- *Federal grant cuts cost to customers in half, less than 50 cents a month*
- *2,100 poles on critical circuits to be strengthened, replaced*

**HONOLULU, Feb. 1, 2024** – The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has approved Hawaiian Electric’s \$190 million Climate Adaptation Transmission and Distribution Resilience Program application, which will help defend against the increasing threat of wildfires and harden its five island electric grids against severe weather-related events fueled by climate change.

The decision is an essential regulatory step enabling Hawaiian Electric to move forward with \$95 million in funding granted under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) by matching it with \$95 million to come from customers. By applying for and receiving the grant, Hawaiian Electric reduced the cost to customers by half. The estimated impact on a typical monthly bill for a residential customer using 500 kilowatt hours will be \$0.17 on O’ahu, \$0.47 on Hawai’i Island and \$0.39 in Maui County.

“As climate change progresses, the frequency and severity of severe weather events is likely to increase,” the PUC stated in its decision (Docket 2022-0135). “Given the critical services that rely on electric service to function and our state’s geographic isolation, it is imperative that our electric grid be able to withstand these growing challenges.”

Hawaiian Electric’s 5-year plan includes a slate of initial, foundational grid resilience investments, including the replacement and strengthening of 2,100 poles on critical circuits, as the first phase of a long-term climate adaptation effort. Investing in a more resilient power system will address the increasing threat of wildfires, reduce the severity of damage when major events happen and enable service to be restored more quickly.

The awarding of the federal grant was first announced by President Biden during a visit to Maui soon after the deadly Aug. 8 wildfires that devastated Lahaina.

“We appreciate the PUC’s approval of our plan and we thank the U.S. Department of Energy and the Biden Administration for their funding support as we work with partners across the state to help Maui recover, to reduce the risk of wildfires and to make our system stronger,” said Colton Ching, Hawaiian Electric senior vice president of planning and technology.

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The program includes:

- Wildfire Mitigation – System hardening and increased situational awareness and control (e.g., cameras, sensors and reclosers) in areas identified as having elevated wildfire risk
- Hazard Tree Removal – The removal – not trimming – of large off-right-of-way trees that are weak, dead, diseased, or structurally compromised and pose a risk to falling on power lines
- Critical Transmission Hardening – Replacing poles and conductors on high-priority transmission lines, including two on Maui
- Critical Circuit Hardening – Strengthening circuits serving critical customers such as hospitals, public infrastructure and critical defense facilities
- Critical Pole Hardening and Replacement – e.g., Poles that support multiple circuits; replacing poles with fire-resistant materials
- Undergrounding portions of certain distribution circuits
- Control Center Resilience – Hardening of existing system control centers, relocating and elevating the Maui control center to avoid flooding and developing a backup control center on O‘ahu

Hawaiian Electric first began developing its Wildfire Safety Strategy in 2019 and continues to adapt it to address the elevated risks in Hawai‘i. Hawaiian Electric is focusing its efforts in areas identified by the state as being at risk for wildfires.

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