

Puna Geothermal Venture
Geothermal Repower Project Environmental Impact Statement
Public Scoping Meeting
August 17, 2022 – Pāhoa Neighborhood Facility

Proposed Action Information Sheet

Puna Geothermal Venture is currently authorized for and operating a geothermal power plant in the Puna District and proposes to replace the current operating power-generating units with up to four energy converters. The Project would increase the production of renewable energy at the existing facility (within the current site fence line) using new, more efficient units on a smaller land footprint compared to the existing units. The Project would increase power production from 38 to 46 megawatts in Phase 1 and further increase production to 60 megawatts in Phase 2.

As part of the Project, the existing 12 steam and brine energy converters would be replaced with three new energy converters in Phase 1 (and one (1) additional converter in Phase 2) at a new location on the site. The amount of power generated in Phase 1 matches the amount approved in the Amended and Restated Power Purchase Agreement. Puna Geothermal Venture would need to further amend the agreement prior to implementing Phase 2 which would increase power generation to 60 megawatts.

The overall property size would remain the same. Most of the existing infrastructure and buildings would remain for the Project including administration buildings, the control room, maintenance areas, well pads, and the gathering system.

Why is this Environmental Impact Statement being prepared?

On March 16, 2022, the State of Hawaii Public Utilities Commission approved the Amended and Restated Power Purchase Agreement (Decision and Order No. 38276) with conditions that the “HEPA review” be complete prior to the commencement of Project construction. The County of Hawai‘i Planning Department has been designated the approving agency for the Project.

The Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared in accordance with Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes and Chapter 11-200.1 Hawaii Administrative Rules. The Project covered by the Environmental Impact Statement proposes to upgrade equipment and associated infrastructure. Under a recent new interpretation of statutory definitions of “land” by the Public Utilities Commission, the heat extracted from the geothermal fluid beneath the site, a resource to which the State of Hawai‘i claims title, is state “land,” so the Project’s use of the geothermal resource triggers environmental review. The property is held in private title and no state or county funds are proposed to be used for the Project.