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NEWS RELEASE

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Hawaii lawmakers pass nation's first 100% renewable energy requirement

HONOLULU—Hawaii lawmakers voted 74-2 today to pass the nation's first 100% renewable energy requirement. The measure, House Bill 623, makes Hawaii a global leader in renewable energy policy by requiring that 100% of the islands' electricity must be generated from renewable energy resources—such as wind, solar, and geothermal—no later than 2045.

"Hawaii lawmakers made history today—not only for the state, but for the planet," said Jeff Mikulina, Executive Director of the Blue Planet Foundation.

The measure, if enacted by Governor David Ige, would make Hawaii the first state in the nation with such a 100% renewable energy standard. Blue Planet Foundation, whose mission is to clear the path for 100% renewable energy, praised the move.

"Passage of this measure is a historic step towards a fossil fuel free Hawaii," said Mikulina. "This visionary policy is a promise to future generations that their lives will be powered not by climate-changing fossil fuel, but by clean, local, and sustainable sources of energy."

"We applaud the leadership of both the House and the Senate, and of the energy committee chairs, Rep. Chris Lee and Sen. Mike Gabbard, for helping make this historic policy a reality," he added.

"As the first state to move toward 100% renewable energy, Hawaii is raising the bar for the rest of the country," said Lee, the Chairman of the House Energy and Environmental Protection Committee and introducer

of HB 623. "Local renewable projects are already cheaper than liquid natural gas and oil, and our progress toward meeting our renewable energy standards has already saved local residents hundreds of millions on their electric bills. Moving to 100% renewable energy will do more to reduce energy prices for local residents in the long term than almost anything else we could do."

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee and a champion of the measure in the Senate, shared that sentiment.

"With this bill, we'll now be the most populated set of islands in the world with an independent grid to establish a 100% renewable electricity goal," said Sen. Gabbard. "Through this process of transformation Hawaii can be the model that other states and even nations follow. And we'll achieve the biggest energy turnaround in the country, going from 90% dependence on fossil fuels to 100% clean energy."

House Bill 623 also increases the interim requirement to 30% renewable by 2020. Last year, Hawaii generated about 22% of its electricity from renewable resources.

While Blue Planet had hoped for an earlier target date, 2045 was a compromise reached by lawmakers.

"The progress we are seeing in renewable energy and storage technology is showing us that Hawaii can cost effectively rid itself of fossil fuel sooner than we think," said Mikulina.

A few locations around the globe have already achieved 100% clean energy (Iceland, El Hierro, Tokelau, and others), and some have set 100% renewable energy targets (Denmark, by 2050; Tuvalu, Cape Verde, and other small island nations, by 2020; and Japan's Fukushima prefecture by 2040). Currently, 29 states plus Washington, D.C., have renewable energy standards. Since 2009, Hawaii has had the highest standard of the states (40% renewable by 2030), although several states are already exceeding these standards by using renewables for 60 to 90% of their local electricity generation. The California legislature is currently considering two measures to increase the state's requirement to 50% renewable by 2030.

"The greatest achievements in history all started with a goal," said Henk Rogers, President of Blue Planet Foundation. "Setting our new goal of 100% renewable energy for the islands is the vision we need today to achieve a sustainable tomorrow."

Community leaders also praised the legislature's leadership in setting the highest renewable energy standard.

"Hawaii can be a bright spot—a story of hope for environmental stewardship around the world, said Nainoa Thompson, Native Hawaiian navigator and the president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. "Our islands will be some of the first to be deeply affected by climate change, and we have an opportunity today to take the lead for the nation. Together, we will chart a course for a more sustainable Hawaii and a more sustainable Island Earth."

Blue Planet Foundation led a broad lobbying and grassroots effort to cultivate support for the policy. The organization also led an effort to channel the support of students statewide to

lawmakers in the form of letters and illustrations. Over 500 drawings were collected (and available for viewing online at blueplanetfoundation.org/2040). The illustrations were compiled into a coffee table book that students delivered to all legislators and the Governor.

"The messages from the students were really a special moment—they underscored why we worked so hard to lock in 100% energy independence for Hawaii," said Mikulina. "These students will be inheriting the consequences of decisions leaders make today. They are raising our aspirations—and our expectations."

In addition to House Bill 623, lawmakers passed legislation today to further support achievement of the 100% renewable energy requirement. Legislation directing the Public Utilities Commission to establish a community solar program, Senate Bill 1050, passed by a large margin. The measure creates a program that enables electricity customers to own or lease renewable energy equipment located anywhere on their island grid. Participants will receive credit for that energy on their electric bill, just as if the panels were located on their own roof. Legislators also passed Senate Bill 349, a measure establishing a tax credit for locally produced biofuels.

"With policies like these, Hawaii will be sending a signal to the world that 100% renewable energy isn't just a vision, it's a commitment," said Mikulina.

Hawai'i's Renewable Energy Future

