

Energy Rates Working Group

Minutes

June 23, 2003

Attendance:

Ruby Hargrave, Dennis Doi, Kris Foster, Tom Matsuda, Chuck Totto, Sharon Miyashiro, Regina Gregory

I. Introductions and Overview

Sharon Miyashiro gave an overview of the Hawaii Energy Policy Project. This working group is one of several dealing with social, economic, and cultural issues relating to energy.

II. Discussion

Chuck Totto presented a preliminary draft by Jim Lazar, et al, on low income programs in the electricity sector. It gives examples of programs to assist low income persons regarding energy conservation and renewable resources. It was agreed that the report would be copied and mailed to working group members to read prior to the next meeting. Mr. Totto will also check for related information from the National Consumer Law Center and will email information to the working group members.

Regina Gregory noted that HECO's most recent electric bill insert mentions the state's Low Income Energy Assistance Program which is administered by HCAP. Kris Foster clarified that the funds were from a federal block grant which goes directly to the utility on behalf of low income customers. About 4,000 families benefited from the program last year, with the average of \$160 per family for the year.

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Ruby Hargrave mentioned another federal program administered by HCAP. In collaboration with Job Corps, they fabricated and installed solar water heaters for low income residents.

Kris Foster presented data from the Department of Human Services on the number of persons receiving public assistance and the amount and types of assistance. The dollar amounts are very small so that the probability is great that there may be thousands of residents who have difficulty paying their electric bills and/or acquiring conservation or solar equipment.

It was agreed that we should get data on the average residential electric bills, and information on Hawaii programs to help low income people reduce their bills with energy conservation and/or alternative energy resources such as solar water heaters.

III. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday July 7, at 12:00 noon in the HCAP Conference Room (1109 Maunakea St. 2d Floor)