



Renewable Energy.
Sustainable Development.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Safety: Does the Project pose a fire risk to the community?

The Paeahu Solar Project is designed safely according to applicable national building and fire codes and best management practices and will serve as an additional firebreak to the nearby community, reducing its current fire risk.

The Project will employ multiple layers of fire prevention and electrical protection measures to reduce risk of ignition or fire damage to the solar Project and surrounding area. Project infrastructure will be designed in accordance with applicable national building and fire codes and will incorporate multiple layers of controls and electrical protection to constantly monitor and avoid failures and electrical faults. In addition, the BESS unit enclosures are design to limit fire propagation, will be placed on noncombustible based and will have a 10-foot perimeter fire break made of gravel or as similar noncombustible base. The project's Vegetation Management Plan includes measures and risk-reduction strategies such as implementation of fuel breaks and fuel management (e.g., mowing, grazing, etc.). The Vegetation Management Plan was submitted to Maui County Department of Fire and Public Safety for review and input. The Maui Fire Department acknowledged that the project would serve as a firebreak to offer additional protection to the Maui Meadows neighborhood. Therefore, through its design and risk-reduction measures, the project will reduce risk of wildfire danger to the adjacent community.

Flooding: Does the Project increase flooding risk?

Water discharge into downstream properties will remain at or less than predevelopment conditions.

The Paeahu Project design seeks to minimize the amount of impervious surface by retaining the existing vegetation and topsoil where practical. Paeahu Solar is aware of the existing flooding issues in the Maui Meadows neighborhood. As a result, the project team conducted extensive studies on the existing drainage patterns in the Project Area to understand the potential for flooding within and downslope of the Project Area, and design stormwater facilities sufficient to manage project related stormwater.

As a conservative estimate, the design team estimated the footprint of the solar panel arrays would have zero percent permeability when calculating the stormwater runoff for the site under proposed conditions. Onsite stormwater calculations were based on the requirements of the County of Maui's Rules for the Design of Storm Drainage Facilities (Maui County Administrative Rules Title MC-15, Chapter 4). Using the calculated onsite stormwater amounts, Paeahu Solar's design team developed a drainage plan to manage stormwater flow rates and ensure water quality. Rock berms/swales are incorporated in the plan to capture stormwater runoff in several retention areas distributed through the site. The retention areas will be designed to retain and allow for infiltration or evapotranspiration of stormwater, as needed to reduce peak flows similar to pre-development levels. The Project's drainage plan will ensure there will be no adverse effects on the adjacent or downstream properties due to the Project. Paeahu Solar remains committed to ongoing maintenance of the stormwater drainage system throughout operations.

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Environment: Can you mitigate impacts to flora/fauna?

The majority of the Paeahu Project Area is composed of disturbed agricultural land (Class E soils) that is dominated by plant and wildlife species that are not native to the Hawaiian Islands. Kiawe (*Prosopis pallida*) and Buffelgrass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) are the dominant species in the Project Area and therefore the Project Area is not a native dryland forest. Most of the native species observed in the Project Study Area are present in the vicinity and relatively common across Maui and the other Hawaiian Islands.

The Paeahu Solar Project has conducted detailed biological studies to assess the existing species and habitats found within the Project Area. Only one individual listed plant (ma'o hau hele or *Hibiscus brackenridgei* ssp. *brackenridgei*) was identified in the Project Area and the Project layout has been designed to avoid impacts to this plant. The endangered Blackburn's sphinx moth is also known to be present in the Project Area; however, its habitat within the Project Area is limited to the invasive, non-native tree tobacco plant. The Project's construction and operation will avoid impacts to the listed species through the implementation of regulated avoidance and minimization measures provided by the local and federal agencies who work to protect these species.

Archaeological and Cultural: Are historic properties being appropriately assessed?

An Archaeological Inventory Survey (AIS) and Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) were completed for the project. The AIS report, which was approved by SHPD in February 2021, made recommendations to mitigate impacts to archaeological sites that were identified and documented through the AIS. These recommendations were developed in close consultation with cultural descendants from the Honua'ula District. Mitigation plans, including a Preservation Plan, Data Recovery Plan, and Archaeological Monitoring Plan, were approved by SHPD in October 2021.

The AIS resulted in the identification and recordation of 18 historic properties containing 52 component features within the survey area. The AIS did not identify any burial sites. Of the 18 identified historic properties, 14 sites will not be impacted during construction and operations. Four sites containing single features will potentially be impacted by the Project. Two of these sites (an agricultural mound and a C-shaped enclosure) were recommended for data recovery, which has been completed in accordance with the SHPD approved Data Recovery Plan. The other two sites that may be impacted (a clearing mound that was tested during the AIS and yielded no subsurface archaeological deposits, and a small mound interpreted as a marker) have been recommended for archaeological monitoring during construction, as each of these has low potential to contain subsurface archaeological deposits. These commitments are contained in the SHPD approved Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the entire Project Study Area.

Project Siting: Why did you choose this location?

The following information describes why the Project location was selected rather than an alternate location on Maui. Determining the location for a solar project is a multifaceted process that goes beyond simply looking at the solar radiation. Other key considerations include access to existing transmission infrastructure and grid resilience, available buildable land, and avoidance of sensitive cultural and/or environmental resources.

- ***Access to Transmission and Grid Resilience:*** As noted above, the Hawaiian Electric's PSIP identified a transmission constraint in South Maui and identified the addition of generation capacity in South Maui as a non-transmission alternative to upgrading the transmission line or building a new transmission line to serve South Maui. The PSIP further notes that previous attempts to upgrade the transmission line serving South Maui had received significant community opposition because of the aesthetic impact of upgrading the line. Therefore, the Applicant focused its search for potential solar energy sites to the South Maui area to respond to the current grid needs.
- ***Access to Available Buildable Land:*** The decision to build the Project on 'Ulupalakua Ranch lands was based on two primary factors. First, the existing Auwahi switchyard is located on 'Ulupalakua Ranch and has capacity to accommodate the interconnection of 15 MWs of solar energy. The Auwahi switchyard in South Maui where a non-transmission alternative discussed above will provide benefit to the Maui Electric grid. Therefore, the Applicant focused its search for potential solar energy sites near the Auwahi switchyard to minimize the length of the overhead generation-tie line (which further minimizes visual and environmental concerns related to the overhead transmission line). Second, the potential solar energy site must meet certain topographic conditions to be considered buildable. Most of the topography at 'Ulupalakua Ranch is sloping with steep undulations that would be unbuildable or require excessive grading inconsistent with ongoing use of the land for agricultural uses. The terrain in the northwestern section of 'Ulupalakua Ranch (i.e., in the location of the Project Study Area) is the most viable area since the terrain is flatter with gentler slopes and is unproductive, fallow grazing land (Class E soils).
- ***Avoidance of Sensitive Cultural and Environmental Resources:*** In response to community feedback regarding the proximity of the Project to the Maui Meadows subdivision, Paeahu Solar underwent an expedited but comprehensive assessment of an alternative site located 0.25 miles to the south of the proposed Project Study Area (on the same TMK owned by 'Ulupalakua Ranch) between April and July 2019. This alternative site was selected because it met the other site selection criteria (e.g., located in South Maui, near the Auwahi switchyard, on available buildable lands). The assessment included archaeological, environmental, and technical surveys and assessments as well as consultation with the community (June 3, 4, and 5, 2019 Information Sessions), meetings with stakeholders (April through July 2019), and a site visit and post-site visit meeting with the Aha Moku and the Sierra Club (June 29, 2019 and August 24, 2019). The alternative site assessment showed potential for significant archaeological and environmental impacts. The alternative site contains several significant archaeological sites that must be avoided. Also, the topography in the alternative site would require substantially more disturbance to the land and surrounding environment (e.g., cut and fill, drainage, erosion and sediment) compared to the Project Study Area due to the extent of grading that would be required for the solar arrays. Relocating the Project south to the alternative site was determined not to be feasible based primarily on the potential archaeological impacts and steep terrain.