



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 8, 2020

NELHA Selected to Serve as a Connector to NREL's American Made Challenge Program

KAILUA-KONA – The Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai'i Authority (NELHA) announced it was selected by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to participate in the [American-Made Solar Prize](#) and its goal to accelerate and sustain American entrepreneurship and solar innovation.

NELHA supports innovation by providing a unique combination of natural resources including some of the highest solar resources in the nation, low rainfall, plentiful low-cost cooling using 5°C deep sea water, solar and energy storage test beds, incubator facilities and business services at a 870 acre technology park on the island of Hawaii. NELHA has been the successful demonstration site for novel renewable energy technologies in the past, and plans to continue this work by being a Connector in the American-Made Network, a diverse and powerful network consisting of national laboratories, universities, energy incubators, facilities, industry partners and others essential to the success of new innovations that will be inspired by the Solar Prize competition.

“Connectors truly are the backbone to our American-Made Challenges. They help bring new talent into the program and play a critical role in helping our teams progress throughout the prize competitions,” said Debbie Brodt Giles, NREL's American Made Challenge prize administrator. “I am excited to welcome NELHA to the network and am looking forward to seeing more innovative ideas come from the state of Hawaii.”

The American-Made Network will help Solar Prize competitors succeed as they compete to address the industry's biggest challenges and opportunities. Through mentoring and business development support, assistance with digital design and prototyping, access to the research

facilities necessary to test and validate their solutions, and support finding and connecting with private investors and industry partners, the network supports competitors through a series of three successive prize competitions.

The highly successful prize competition recently launched Solar Prize Round 4. Connectors play a key role in helping to recruit competitors, who have until October 4, 2020 to apply.

“This connector role builds upon the various previous energy initiatives where NELHA has partnered, shared resources, and attracted companies interested in testing and evaluating energy systems on the Island of Hawaii,” said Gregory Barbour, NELHA Executive Director. The most recent projects includes the testing of sodium ion, vanadium flow and lead acid energy storage devices at NELHA’s energy storage test bed as well as a solar desalination demonstration project utilizing four acres of existing concentrated solar panels expected to produce 120,000 gallons of freshwater per day from seawater.

NREL’s American Made Solar Prize is an opportunity to accelerate innovation of solar technologies which will help the State achieve its goal of 100 percent renewable energy by 2045.

About Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority

NELHA administers the world’s premier energy and ocean technology park. This unique master-permitted park is located on 870 acres of prime coastal property in Kailua-Kona, Hawai’i and offers research support facilities for the development of renewable energy and other demonstration projects that utilize the unique resources found at the park. It is the world’s largest facility that continually brings ashore high quality, pristine supplies of both warm surface and cold deep seawater 24 hours a day with views to reap economic potentials from the dual temperature seawater delivery system and high solar insolation. Tenants located in HOST Park work at the pre-commercial, commercial, research and educational levels. It is the largest diversified economic development project in the State and is solely focused on developing green economic projects. More information on NELHA can be found at nelha.hawaii.gov.

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