



NEWS RELEASE

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NELHA Serves as a Gold Connector to NREL's American-Made Challenges Program

KAILUA-KONA – The Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai'i Authority (NELHA) announced that it continues to serve as a gold-level member of the American-Made Network, part of the American-Made Challenges program, whose goal is to accelerate and sustain American entrepreneurship and energy 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 as a gold-level 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 prizes.

American-Made Network Connectors help prize competitors succeed as they compete to address the industry's biggest challenges and opportunities. NELHA achieved its gold status in 2020. 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 successive prize competitions including [Round 5 of the multi-million-dollar American-Made Solar Prize](#), which recently commenced. This competition, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and administered by the National

Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), encourages innovators to come up with ideas to energize solar energy in new and exciting ways.

Round 5 features a two-track structure, which invites both hardware and software technologies to compete separately and allows for more solar innovation than ever before. The [Hardware Track](#) offers \$3 million in cash prizes to competitors over three progressive contests. Simultaneously, the [Software Track](#) offers \$1.6 million in cash prizes over three contests, plus an additional challenge that awards competitors who incorporate environmental justice principles into their technologies. Participants across both tracks will follow the same timeline but compete for separate prizes. The first set of prize applications are due October 5, 2021.

“In past years, we were able to successfully assist previous competitors and this has in part earned us gold-level recognition within the Connector program. We plan to continue assisting companies in 2021,” said Gregory Barbour, NELHA Executive Director. He added that, “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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