



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: July 21, 2010

010-041

DOH & DBEDT BEGIN WORK ON E-PERMIT SYSTEM WITH \$375,000 FEDERAL GRANT

HONOLULU -- The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) today began a partnership with the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) for the development of an electronic permitting system that will streamline the environmental permit process for clean energy projects and other regulated businesses. As part of the Hawai'i Clean Energy Initiative (HCEI), DBEDT will provide \$375,000 in federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to assist in the system development.

"The Department of Health is excited about this new partnership and the ability to use federal funds for this critically needed project," said Deputy Director for Environmental Health Laurence Lau. "An e-permit system that can capture, organize and analyze data is an invaluable resource for clean energy projects and the thousands of annual environmental permits, licenses, approvals, reports and compliance reviews that are mostly handled on paper now. This project is long overdue and comes at time when limited resources and staffing require innovative solutions."

"Once we learned about the Department of Health's project, we immediately saw it as an excellent opportunity to use ARRA funds and help streamline the environmental permit process for both public and private clean energy and other projects," said Ted Peck, Administrator, Hawai'i State Energy Office within DBEDT. "Development of this system can reduce costs and start-up time for clean energy construction and other projects that fuel our economy."

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Streamlining the permitting process will further help meet the State's goal of reducing our dependence on foreign oil and increasing our energy security."

The DOH currently reviews, approves, issues and enforces approximately more than 1,500 environmental permits and licenses each year; provides review and approval for about 5,000-6,500 plans, other permits, reports and variances annually; and ensures compliance for over 3,000 federal and other requirements annually. These estimates do not include more than 8,400 estimated food service permits, and other food and sanitation permits required annually for the protection of public health.

"We give priority in processing clean energy permit applications and are interested in accelerating the processing while maintaining the environmental protections," Deputy Director Lau added. "This is the first and very important phase of an ongoing automation of environmental permits and other processes."

Completion of this initial phase of the e-permit project is expected in one year. The project will develop a central public web access portal for environmental permit applications, forms, instructions, and education, and allow for on-line payment and application approvals. It is anticipated that once in place the e-permit system will save applicants and department staff considerable time and provide consistent information for better decisions. Compiling permit data electronically will also allow the DOH to analyze and quickly improve procedures when needed.

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