



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in MidWeek's Central Oahu VOICE section on Wednesday, July 8, 2015.

Supporting Solar Farms

At its most recent meeting, the Mililani Neighborhood Board passed a resolution reaffirming its support for four proposed solar energy farms – two in Mililani, and one each in Waipio and Waiawa – near the communities that Board members represent. These four are all projects of SunEdison – a major solar power company that has been aggressive in the market in planning to meet Hawaii's future energy needs. Unfortunately, these four are also among a total of seven solar generating farms that the Public Utilities Commission has put on hold, pending a PUC request for additional information from Hawaiian Electric Company. The other generating facilities are proposed by three other companies - two on the Leeward coast and one in the Kunia area.

In its resolution, the Board noted its previous support for the SunEdison projects stated last year and urged HECO and the PUC to move forward in a timely manner to meet federal tax incentive deadlines. SunEdison explained its dilemma to the Board; the shared goal is to get the power flowing to the HECO distribution grid as soon as possible.

The need for this alternate energy resource is clear. The four facilities nearest us, along with the three others elsewhere on Oahu, would generate as much as 240 megawatts of electrical power. That's enough to supply electricity to an estimated 70-80,000 households that would help Oahu meet self-sufficiency goals enunciated in legislation signed into law by the governor just a month ago. The PUC is acting prudently to make sure HECO is being forthright about its concerns. But the public and the companies awaiting the go-ahead deserve a resolution of the standoff once those concerns have been addressed.

Mililani Rotary – nearly 20 years of 'Service Above Self'

The Rotary Club of Mililani Sunrise will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of its charter next year. The Mililani club is one of dozens of Rotary organizations around the State that are dedicated to improving their communities in a variety of ways. Within just the last few months, our Rotary members have done car wash fundraisers, helped with meal prep at the Institute for Human Services shelter, and assisted at the Mililani Public Library Book Sale. Through the year, the Club commits to distributing school supplies and dictionaries for classroom use, working with a student group at Mililani High School, and supporting vision screening programs in our schools.

Our major activity is an annual golf tournament that raises about \$15,000 each year that we award as scholarship grants to graduating high school seniors whose families live in Mililani. This year, we presented grants to recognize both academic and athletic achievements to a dozen young men and women who are going on to UH campuses and mainland colleges this fall. It has been truly heartwarming to be able to maintain this commitment for the past 18 years.

The statewide Hawaii Rotary District 5000 is celebrating 100 years in the islands this year. You can find out more about our Club online at: <http://www.rotaryd5000.org/>. Mahalo to our outgoing President, Dexter Yee, and congratulations and best wishes to Linda Yoshikami who will guide us over the next year.



Mahalo Dexter Yee for your leadership at Rotary Club of Mililani Sunrise for the 2014-2015 term. Best wishes to Linda Yoshikami who assumes the Club's presidency at the July meeting.