

✘ Hawaii may be a paradise, but not if you're driving a fossil fuel car and getting all of your electricity from the grid. The state has the highest gas and electricity prices in the nation, burning imported fossil fuels and costing residents dearly. Yet Hawaii has abundant renewable resources, from solar to wind to geothermal. Coupled with its limited island geography, the state is a perfect fit for all-battery electric vehicles, like the Nissan LEAF, Ford Focus EV, and Mitsubishi i-MiEV. Many residents with rooftop solar have already discovered the financial gains from fueling at home on renewables rather than at the gas station.

Okay, so that may be great for those lucky enough to live in Hawaii, but what about the rest of us on the non-tropical mainland? Well, electric vehicle (EV) deployment in Hawaii can produce enormous benefits for the rest of the country and the world. Eight million people visit Hawaii each year, and if those visitors have an opportunity to rent an electric vehicle and charge it at their hotel and key tourist sites, they will experience an extended test drive that could demystify the EV driving and charging process and encourage purchases back home. In addition, mass adoption of EVs in Hawaii could present a test bed for how to integrate intermittent renewables with a distributed network of hundreds of thousands of EVs charging and potentially storing surplus renewables.

Earlier this year, I visited most of the major islands in the state with the University of Hawaii, Maui College, [Maui Electric Vehicle Alliance](#) (MEVA), funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, to report on Maui's experience and learn about the barriers to adoption on each island from key stakeholders. As a result of the findings from that trip, the Center for Law, Energy and the Environment at Berkeley Law and University of Hawaii, Maui College are today releasing the report "[Electric Vehicle Paradise: How Hawaii Can Lead the World in Deployment](#)." The report describes barriers and solutions to EV deployment on each major island and statewide. Key solutions include an expanded public charging network in key locations through greater private sector coordination, more EVs offered by island car dealers and car rental agencies, and the removal of limits on how many customers can install rooftop PV and receive retail credit on their electricity bills for the energy supplied. If any Legal Planet readers happen to be in Honolulu, I'll be presenting the report findings at the [Asia Pacific Clean Energy Summit and Expo](#) today at 1:30pm. With concerted action on these and other recommendations, more residents of Hawaii will soon get a chance to say "aloha" to EVs, to everyone's benefit.