



## Your Views for September 26

'Own the power'

Turning on the lights has a bigger effect beyond your home. There is a direct connection between the dollars you provide to HELCO for electricity and Wall Street. The dollars move through Hilo to Honolulu and on to shareholders — many who don't live in Hawaii.

If the NextEra/Hawaiian Electric deal is approved by the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission, the dollars from your pocket will travel even farther offshore, diverted through NextEra's headquarters in Florida, then to global investors.

On Kauai, when a resident flips the switch, their dollars flow back to the community utility — Kauai Island Utility Cooperative — which uses the money to operate the system. If KIUC has more than what it needs, those funds go back into the pockets of Kauai ratepayers.

The upcoming PUC public listening sessions Tuesday and Wednesday on Hawaii Island are an opportunity to let the commissioners know we support another option: Hawaii Island Energy Cooperative. It is a unique opportunity for all energy consumers to "own the power."

Let the PUC know Hawaii Island wants to consider a different option to the conglomerate utility. The investor-owned utility model is not bad. However, let's look at homegrown alternatives that allow us to turn to power sources that suit us best. Renewable, environmentally friendly and cost-effective sources.

If you come early to the listening sessions, which start at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Hilo High and at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Kealakehe High, supporters of HIEC will give you an Own the Power T-shirt. The PUC needs to hear from us.

- Noelani Kalipi

Hilo