

Discussion of LNG, utility ownership models allowed at NextEra-HECO hearings, regulators rule

Nov 3, 2015, 1:04pm HST

By Duane Shimogawa, Reporter Pacific Business News

Hawaii regulators have ruled that the discussion of liquefied natural gas plans and other utility ownership models will be allowed at upcoming hearings involving NextEra Energy Inc.'s proposed \$4.3 billion acquisition of Hawaiian Electric Co., according to public documents.

Last month, the two companies made a request to the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission to nix talk of LNG and municipally-owned or co-op owned utilities at evidentiary hearings later this month.

The companies have singled out Hawaii Island Energy Cooperative, the County of Maui and Hawaii Gas, intervenors taking part in the regulatory review of the acquisition, to have these entities not talk about utility ownership models or LNG.

Both HIEC and Maui County are looking into these ownership models, while Hawaii Gas has plans to ship in LNG in bulk amounts for power supply, among other uses.

The companies said that such information is not relevant to the acquisition case, and that it would basically take away time from discussing the issues that pertain to the case.

The commission said that it granted Hawaii Gas intervenor status based in part on how the gas utility's stated interests may be affected if it approved the acquisition, with such interests including LNG plans.

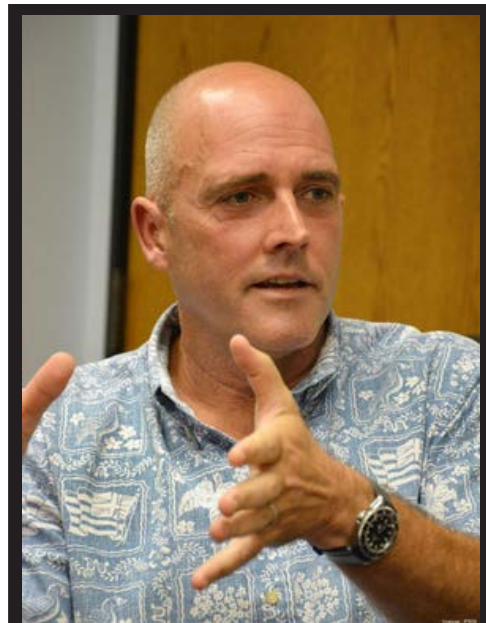
The PUC also noted that it granted HIEC intervenor status based in part on how the co-op's stated interest may be affected if the deal goes through, with such interests including talk of co-op models.

The commission also pointed out that information on municipally-owned utilities also is relevant to the case, thus letting Maui County talk about a county-owned utility model at the hearings.

The evidentiary hearings are scheduled to begin on Nov. 30.

The PUC could make a decision on the acquisition by June 2016, although depending on how long upcoming hearings go, that timeframe could be extended.

NextEra Energy and Hawaiian Electric, through their respective spokespeople, had no further comment.



Eric Gleason, president of
NextEra Energy Hawaii
Photo by: Tina Yuen PBN