

# Star Advertiser

By Star-Advertiser staff

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## Utility co-op sought on Big Island

The Hawaii Island Energy Cooperative is moving forward with its attempt to split off Hawaii island from the Hawaiian Electric Industries umbrella to become a cooperative similar to the one on Kauai.

HIEC said Monday that it has been granted nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service.

“Receiving this official approval is fantastic news,” said Marco Mangelsdorf, HIEC director and spokesman, in a statement. “This sets the stage for HIEC to be an operating nonprofit utility serving the Big Island.”

HIEC was founded during the state’s review of NextEra Energy Inc.’s purchase of Hawaiian Electric Industries. Even though the sale was denied, HIEC is still seeking to create a cooperative for Hawaii island.

Mangelsdorf said the new status for the cooperative is important as both Hawaii Electric Light Co. on Hawaii island and HECO on Oahu have submitted requests to increase electrical rates. HECO requested Friday to boost revenue with the state Public Utilities Commission.

In September HELCO asked the PUC for a base-rate increase of \$19.3 million, or 6.5 percent. If approved by the PUC, a typical residential customer on Hawaii island using 500 kilowatt-hours per month will see a \$9.31 monthly bill increase.