



An employee fills his County vehicle with a diesel blend including 20% locally produced biodiesel at the County filling station in Hilo.

County Begins Using Locally Produced Biodiesel

The County of Hawai'i has taken another step toward addressing our energy needs with resources available on Hawai'i Island by moving to a B20 blended biodiesel fuel to power diesel vehicles in the County fleet.

Biodiesel is produced from waste vegetable oil and fats at Big Island Biodiesel. The Kea'au plant, which came online in 2012, is equipped with the latest technology that produces some of the highest quality biodiesel in the U.S. That locally produced fuel is mixed with 80% traditional diesel to make the B20 blend.

Since April, County vehicles that use diesel – including Hele-On Buses, trucks and equipment operated by the Environmental Management and Public Works departments, and fire trucks – have all been using the B20 fuel. The transition required no alterations to the vehicles, tanks, or pumps.



The Big Island Biodiesel refinery in Kea'au's Shipman Business Park is producing the biodiesel for the County from waste vegetable oil and fats.

"The switch to B20 is an example that the leadership in Hawai'i County is committed to improving the economy, the environment, and the health and safety of its community," said Bob King, President of Big Island Biodiesel. "County leadership is truly walking the talk toward sustainability. It will go a long way to assure renewable fuel in Hawai'i will continue to expand."

The move is the latest in a series to reduce fossil fuel usage in County vehicles, including the introduction of the first electric vehicles to the fleet in 2012. The plug-in hybrid Chevy Volts have proven to be a great fit for Hawai'i County, where trips can be as long as 200 miles one way. For trips under 30 miles, the vehicles can run solely on battery power charged by the LEED Silver-certified West Hawai'i Civic Center's 250 kilowatt photovoltaic array. A gasoline-powered generator with a nine-gallon tank allows an additional range of 300-400 miles, depending on topography.