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Letters to the Editor

HECO, BLUEEARTH BIOFUELS HERE WON'T HARM ENVIRONMENT

Bill Kamanu (Letter, Feb. 22) raises a legitimate concern about the impact of increased use of biodiesel from palm oil on rainforests and the creatures living in them.

At Hawaiian Electric Co. and BlueEarth, we believe that doing the right thing also means doing it the right way.

From the start, HECO and BlueEarth committed to develop a policy that will require that we do not accept biofuels from sources that are harming the environment. We are consulting with national and international experts to make sure that our policy is truly effective.

Hawaiian Electric's and BlueEarth's goal in partnering to build a biodiesel refining plant on Maui is not only to reduce Hawai'i's dependence on fossil fuels and limit our impact on global warming, but to encourage locally grown agricultural energy crops.

HECO takes no profit on fuel and will take no profit from this biodiesel enterprise. All profits from HECO's part in the partnership will go to a biofuels public trust fund to support research to find the most efficient, environmentally benign plants to grow here and encourage production of Hawai'i-grown energy feedstock.

The first step in this process, subject to needed approvals from the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission, is to build a plant that will help drive this movement.

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