

**MAUI**

**Maui Business**

# Rotary invests in Second life Solar pilot project to boost Maui's energy resilience and support Maui fire survivors

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The Hawai'i Rotary District 5000 Foundation is continuing its Maui Fires Relief Fund efforts, directing \$40,000 to a bold new pilot project designed to bring emergency power to wildfire-impacted communities.

The grant supports the [Upcountry Energy Resilience Project](#) (UERP), which will provide wildfire survivors with Plug-N-Play backup battery generators, used solar panels, and hands-on technical training—giving families safe, reliable access to electricity during outages and emergencies.

“We hope this pilot project can provide accessible and tangible solutions to address some of the critical vulnerabilities in our community that were highlighted by Maui’s 2023 wildfires,” said Stacey Alapai, Community Energy Advocate & Co-Founder of the Upcountry Energy Resilience Project, “Power outages (planned or not) threaten essential services and not everyone can afford a whole rooftop solar or off-grid system, so we have an opportunity to address many of these concerns at once through this pilot program. We are also excited about the potential to expand the project for Maui residents living in Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) areas in the future.”

“This project is ideal for Maui,” said Frank Szczepanski, FY 25 President of the ECO Maui Rotary Club. “It reuses viable solar panels that would otherwise be discarded in our landfill and will provide much needed power during disasters. This project illustrates what Rotary can do when collaborating with others here in our Maui community.”

“We were initially inspired by a pilot project to provide energy equity to Moloka‘i homesteaders,” explained Shay Chan Hodges, also a co-founder of the UERP.

Working with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Moloka‘i energy experts recently installed nano grid systems for vulnerable residents, including a plug-n-play system that powered a dialysis machine and reduced energy costs by almost 40%.

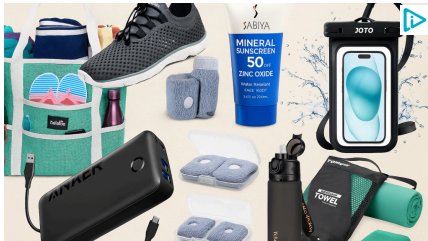
“The more we learned from Molokai folks,” added Chan Hodges, “the more excited we became about the possibilities for Maui residents.”

The Upcountry Energy Resilience Project is looking forward to working with a broad range of educational, industry, and labor union partners to recruit participants, design curriculum, provide webinar and in-person training, and maximize the number of plug-n-play batteries that can be provided at no-cost. Anyone interested in helping should contact Stacey Alapai at [stacey@justactually.com](mailto:stacey@justactually.com) or Shay Chan Hodges at [shay.chanhodges@gmail.com](mailto:shay.chanhodges@gmail.com)

The Upcountry Energy Resilience Project was created to provide education and data for Upcountry residents seeking energy and resilience solutions and is supported by the

National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and the Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP).

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