



June 25, 2021

HSEA Affirms Their Unwavering Commitment to Ethical, Honest, and Transparent Business Practices

To whom it may concern:

The HSEA and its members are committed to conducting business with honesty, integrity, transparency, and the highest ethical standards. Every member of HSEA pledges to abide by a Code of Ethics which explicitly elevates the interests of customers and community over its own business interests; identifies honesty as the guiding business policy; and forbids unscrupulous, misleading, unfair, or fraudulent business practices. The code specifically bans “bad faith, deceptive practices, bribery, fraud and price fixing” and requires advertisements to be “clear and concise, designed to give the customer a fair, clear understanding of costs and performance.”

If the HSEA Board is made aware of any complaints, allegations, or grievances against or about a member company, upon receipt of a written complaint, it will conduct its own investigation through an Ethics Committee. If the allegations are confirmed, remediation or penalties can range from public censure to outright expulsion from HSEA depending on the gravity, quality, magnitude, and frequency of the violation. The HSEA takes its commitment to its Code of Ethics very seriously and notes that the “letter of the law” is a necessary yet insufficient standard to abide by our Code of Ethics. We demand the highest of ethical business behavior whereby even the appearance of bad behavior or impropriety is deemed a violation. And the bad faith actions of any one member of HSEA, or non-member, no matter how seemingly isolated or minor, reflect poorly on the whole industry, and therefore will be taken seriously and not tolerated.


A number of unscrupulous behaviors and actions have recently come to the HSEA Board's attention, including bribery of public officials in the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) and the publication of misleading or deceptive advertorials (i.e., advertisements that look like independent expert editorials) that violate our Code of Ethics.


The HSEA strongly condemns bribery by any member or non-member, and notes that we have been actively working to improve DPP permitting and inspection practices. HSEA played a key role in the recent passage of **Bill 58 (2020)** which will make permitting for clean energy projects more rules-based and transparent. In addition, HSEA is a participating member of the **SolarAPP+ Campaign**, a consortium of solar industry participants and advocacy groups dedicated to rolling out the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's best in class automated on-line permitting tool at the state and municipal level. We believe these actions will not only reduce the time, expense, and complexity of permitting but also greatly reduce the opportunity and ability for public graft and corruption.

A recent advertorial in a local paper by a non-member company also violated our Code of Ethics for being unclear and deceptive. HSEA is not itself a licensed tax professional, so we are not in a position to provide any tax advice nor do we purport to do so in this letter. Customers should always seek the advice and counsel of a tax professional or lawyer on tax or legal matters, and they should conduct their own due diligence on the companies from which they seek products and services. Getting three bids on a job is considered industry best practice. To see a list of HSEA members in good standing please go to HSEA's Member Directory here: <http://www.hsea.org/membership/members>. In general, there are "no free lunches or steak dinners" in business and if a deal seems "too good to be true," it probably is. If a customer doesn't fully understand an offering or deal, they should seek the advice of independent professionals or other trusted sources. Customers can check on businesses and report on bad experiences at the Better Business Bureau at bbb.org.

Thank you for this opportunity to clarify and affirm our deep commitment to HSEA's Code of Ethics. Our work strengthening Hawaii's economy; providing clean, affordable, and resilient power systems to our customers; and advancing Hawaii's 100% clean energy future is far too important; and we can't do it without continuing to strengthen our ties and trust with our customers and community.

Sincerely,
The HSEA Board and Executive Director:



Brian Gold, President
President, The Solaray Corporation


Rolf Christ, Treasurer
President & CEO, R&R Solar Supply


Caroline Carl, Board Member
Deputy Director, Hawaii Energy


Ted Peck, Board Member
President, Holu Hou Energy


Robert Harris, Vice President
Director, Public Policy, Sunrun


Roy Skaggs, Secretary
Director of Sales, Alternate Energy Hawaii


Chris DeBene, Board Member
Managing Partner, Hawaii Energy Connection


Rocky Mould, Executive Director