

Hawaii picked the wrong geothermal, but we can fix it!

Yes, Hawaii picked the wrong geothermal, but we can fix it. My name is S. Amelia Kajiyama and I'll take you along my journey of learning and discovery of how I learned that Hawaii picked the wrong geothermal technology.

I grew up in Lower Puna on Hawaii Island. I experienced many Puna Geothermal Venture H₂S gas releases and loud noise while visiting friends in Leilani or on our farm in Kapoho area. In 1991, I experienced the Puna Geothermal Venture's well blowout. I remember hearing the loud roaring noise, smelling the strong H₂S gas, watching our yard grass and plants die, and listened to many other family and friends' stories about how they were affected by the well blowout.

Being curious, I wondered if there was better geothermal. I came across a National Geographic article about Iceland's Blue Lagoon. Blue Lagoon Resort and Spa is right next to Svartsengi Geothermal Power Plant. Tourists booked months to years in advance to swim in the Svartsengi's geothermal outflow water for its health benefits. They also make spa products using its water too.

While earning degrees in Geoscience & Geological Engineering, I learned Iceland's geology is most like Hawaii's. Iceland has the world's best geothermal technology. Iceland exports their technology around the world. They are also known for being respectful to people's safety and cultural concerns. New Zealand adopted Iceland's geothermal technology in the 1970's. Maori's approval is required to develop a geothermal plant. New Zealand has had no documented geothermal plant accidents.

In 2016, I got a chance to travel to Iceland for a month. I toured the 303 MW Hellisheidi Geothermal Plant (world's largest geothermal plant) and 100 MW Reykjanes Geothermal Plant, which are open to the public year-round and are cooperatively owned by Icelanders. When I visited these plants, I experienced very little smell and very little noise. They were cited near dormant and/or extinct volcanoes. Therefore, Icelandic geothermal technology could work for Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii.

I swam in the waters of the Blue Lagoon. It was amazing. I talked to people from all around the world enjoying swimming in the Blue Lagoon. Many people I talked to didn't notice Svartsengi geothermal plant nearby or realize that they were swimming in its outflow water, which all started back in 1974 when an outflow pipe leaked. Best Industrial accident I ever experienced!

I highly recommend a Hawaii Delegation go to Iceland and see themselves how a better geothermal could work for Hawaii. I would be more than happy to share what I have learned about Iceland geothermal. Iceland National Energy Authority Project Manager- International Projects Baldur Petursson, MSA can assist in providing a tour to a Hawaii Delegation. Baldur Petursson's email is bp@os.is and work phone # 354-569-6000 cell phone # 354-822-4580.
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Kind Regards,

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