Tuesday, April 15: University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program and U.S. Senator Schatz to Convene Green Future Conference to Create a Sustainable Future

Former Vice President Al Gore and U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer to headline conference on Hawai‘i’s Sustainability, Clean Energy, and Smart Growth

Honolulu, HI – Next Tuesday, April 15, world-renowned experts from across the state and nation will convene at the University of Hawai‘i for Ascent – a day-long conference on clean energy and a sustainable future for Hawai‘i that University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program (UH Sea Grant), Chancellor Tom Apple, and U.S. Senator Brian Schatz are hosting. Hawai‘i is a national leader in clean energy initiatives and has become a global model for sustainability. These experts will address key underlying issues of sustainability, and engage directly with high school and college students who are poised to lead these efforts in the future.

At the Ascent conference, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, will join Mr. Geoffrey Anderson, President, Smart Growth America, Mr. Kyle Datta, Co-founder, Ulupono Initiative, Dr. Stephen Meder, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Physical, Environment and Long-Range Planning, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Ms. Hermina Morita, Chair, Hawai‘i Public Utilities Commission, Mr. Bruce Karas, North American Vice President for Sustainability and the Environment, The Coca Cola Company, and Mr. Nainoa Thompson, President, Polynesian Voyaging Society. They will be partnering with state and local experts as well as Hawai‘i’s youth to examine risks and propose solutions to energy and water resource security, and the complexities of climate change.

That evening, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore will present a free public lecture at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Stan Sheriff Center. Tickets are currently sold out, but should seats become available due to no shows they will be released on a first come, first serve basis at the door.

The next day, April 16, Senator Schatz will be holding a field hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources at the East-West Center at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Campus. The Senate’s energy field hearing will focus on meeting sustainability goals in Hawai‘i and the Pacific.

“As a national leader in clean energy development and sustainability, Hawai‘i is the perfect place to hold this important summit of local experts and global leaders like Vice President Gore. By teaming together we can tap into new resources and move forward with solutions that are good for our state, the nation and the world,” said Senator Schatz, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Water and Power Subcommittee.

“We look forward to the positive outcomes this conference will generate with the collaboration of stellar and progressive minds. In no other place is the concept of sustainability more important than being located at least 2,500 miles from the nearest major land mass,” said UHM Chancellor Tom Apple. “We welcome the opportunity to be a part of this movement.”
“A future in which we create economic and social opportunities for all, advance an enriching quality of life, preserve cultural inheritance, and promote stewardship of our natural resources for future generations is within reach” said Professor Gordon Grau, UH Sea Grant director. “We are very fortunate to be partnering with Senator Schatz, who for many years worked at UH Sea Grant and has championed sustainability issues in Hawai‘i long before most people understood its importance. Through this conference we have an opportunity to bring the best and brightest minds together to focus on Hawai‘i and start to build our sustainable future.”

WHAT: Ascent: Building a Secure and Sustainable Water and Energy Future for Hawai‘i

WHEN: Tuesday, April 15, 2014

WHERE: Orvis Auditorium, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Music Department
2600 Campus Rd., Honolulu, HI 96822 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Morning Keynote from U.S. Senator Boxer
Invitation only. Media coverage is invited and encouraged. Please RSVP for additional information.

WHERE: East-West Center, Hawai‘i Imin International Conference Center
1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96822 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Invitation only. Media coverage is invited and encouraged. Please RSVP for additional information.

WHO: University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
U.S. Senator Brian Schatz
National and Local Experts on Sustainable Solutions
Invited conference participants only

Conference speakers:
- U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer
- Mr. Geoffrey Anderson, President, Smart Growth America
- Mr. Kyle Datta, Co-founder, Ulupono Initiative
- Dr. Stephen Meder, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Physical, Environment and Long-Range Planning, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
- Ms. Hermina Morita, Chair, Hawai‘i Public Utilities Commission
- Mr. Bruce Karas, North American Vice President for Sustainability and the Environment, The Coca-Cola Company
- Mr. Nainoa Thompson, President, Polynesian Voyaging Society

Following the conference, 7 p.m. Evening seminar with Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore

The conference is being organized by the University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program of the university’s School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, on behalf of the Chancellor of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa jointly with the office of U.S. Senator Brian Schatz.

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The University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program is part of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s prestigious School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. It supports an innovative program of research, education and extension services directed to the improved understanding and stewardship of coastal and marine resources of the state, region and nation. Science serving Hawai‘i and the Pacific for over 45 years.
The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa serves approximately 20,000 students pursuing more than 225 different degrees. Coming from every Hawaiian island, every state in the nation, and more than 100 countries, UH Mānoa students thrive in an enriching environment for the global exchange of ideas. For more information, visit http://manoa.hawaii.edu. Follow us on Facebook http://www.facebook.com/uhmanoa and Twitter http://twitter.com/UHManoaNews.