

Simonpietri Enterprises Awarded Federal Grant to Make Fertilizer from Fire-Prone Invasive Plants

The Department of Energy grant will support testing at the new Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (SMRFF) in Kapolei.

HONOLULU, HAWAII, UNITED STATES, January 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded [Simonpietri Enterprises](#) LLC a \$206,500 grant to conduct research on producing organic fertilizer from locally-sourced green waste and wildfire-prone invasive plant biomass. This grant provides crucial funding to demonstrate the viability of Simonpietri's idea to manufacture fertilizer in Hawaii from invasive and fast-growing plants like guinea grass and koa haole.



Simonpietri Enterprises employees Naomi Kukac (left) and Jenn Chinen (right) chopping up invasive guineagrass to ship to the mainland for our gasification testing to make biochar at the Univ of North Dakota Energy & Environment Research Center.

"We are thrilled to win this competitive award from the Department of Energy to test out our idea to solve multiple problems at once: support the invasive species removal part of landscape restoration, make organic fertilizer and renewable energy that displaces imported fossil fuel inputs, and provide quality products to local farms and nurseries," said Joelle Simonpietri, owner of Simonpietri Enterprises.

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For the project, Simonpietri Enterprises has partnered with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture

(CTAHR), native Hawaiian plant nursery and landscape restoration organization Hui Ku Maoli Ola, and the Energy and Environmental Research Center of North Dakota (EERC). The Phase I

research accomplished so far has taken invasive guinea grass from a wildfire prevention project done on O'ahu by Hui Ku Maoli Ola, and converted it to biochar and syngas for energy and fertilizer production at the U.S. DOE's National Center for Hydrogen Technology™ gasification pilot laboratory at the North Dakota EERC. The nutrient products will next be tested in crop trials at CTAHR's Waimanalo and Pearl City research stations as a soil amendment and slow-release fertilizer ingredient.

The DOE grant is supporting physical testing for the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (SMRFF) that Simonpietri Enterprises is developing in Kapolei to divert construction and demolition debris and other organic wastes from landfilling and burning, and instead use that material to make renewable energy, organic fertilizer, recycled-material building products, and other circular economy products.

"We are super excited to participate in this project. We all need a way to bring more resources to landscape restoration and fire prevention in Hawaii," added Hui Ku Maoli co-owner Matt Kapaliku Schirman. Hui Ku is also going to be hosting a test of Simonpietri's organic fertilizer product for its seedlings at its native Hawaiian plant nursery in Waimanalo.

"Our SMRFF project is small but would be an important first step in Hawaii to build capability to convert wood and green wastes into renewable power, biochar, and value-added products like organic fertilizer," said Naomi Kukac, Communications and Community Engagement lead at Simonpietri Enterprises. "We are moving closer to breaking ground on this innovative local circular economy solution."

This competitive DOE low-greenhouse gas fertilizer research award demonstrates the strength and timeliness of Simonpietri Enterprises' vision for sustainable agriculture and clean energy in Hawaii. Simonpietri Enterprises is committed to leading the transition to a regenerative local economy that benefits all of Hawaii's communities.

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About Simonpietri Enterprises LLC:

Simonpietri Enterprises LLC develops innovative project solutions to re-use and recycle waste



Invasive tree trimmings sample management at Hui Ku nursery in Waimanalo.

into sustainable products that reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions for the agriculture, energy, and transportation sectors. Our mission is to implement sustainable systems that benefit Hawaii's economy, communities, and ecosystems. For more information, visit www.simonpietri.com.

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