

# Big Island Solar Water Heaters

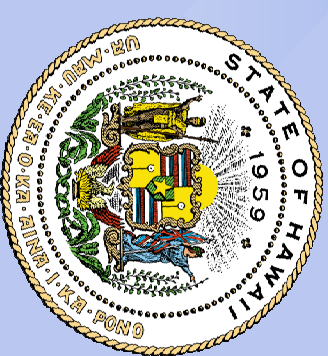
Analysis of Sizing, Costs, and  
Customer Satisfaction

Andrea T. Gill

Energy Conservation Analyst

Hawaii Energy Extension Service

DBEDT Energy, Resources, and Technology Division  
State of Hawaii



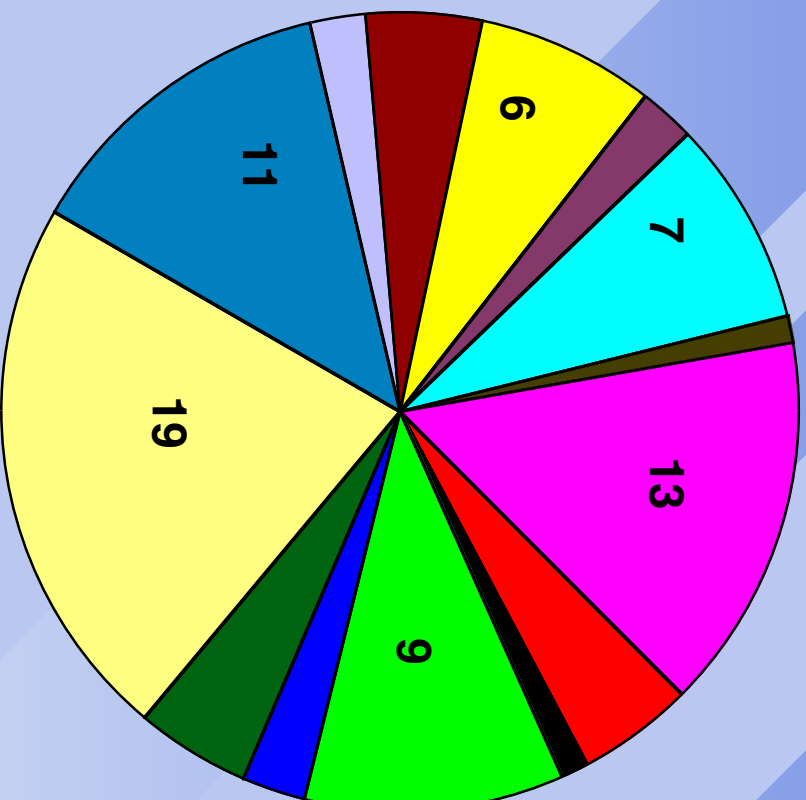
# **Na Makani Low-Cost Solar Water Heating Program**

- **A Rebuild Hawai'i Project**
- **\$37,000 from USDOE through DBEDT**
- **Contractor: Plan To Protect, Inc.**
- **Subcontractor: Na Makani Energy Initiative**
- **August 1, 2000 through July 31, 2002**
- **Target: 100 SWH installations**

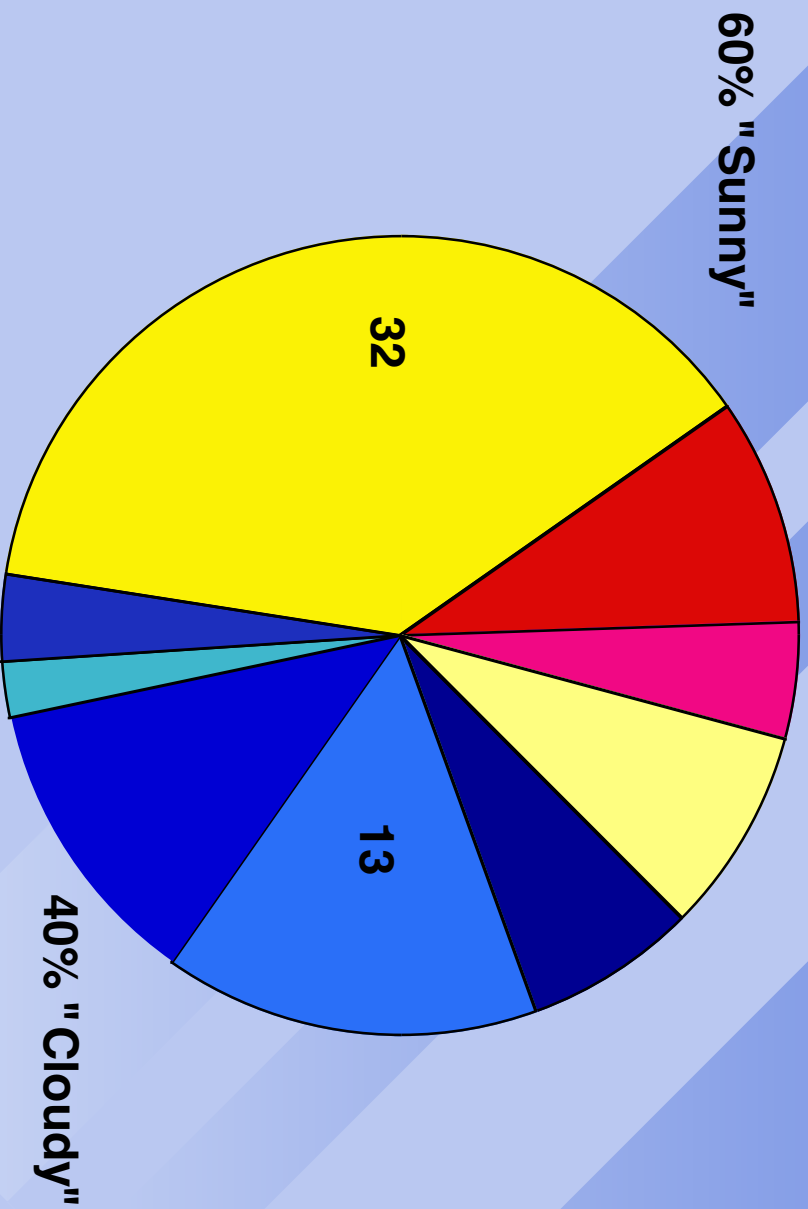
# Project Objectives

- **Original: Low-Cost SWH using existing tanks, recycled collectors in N. Kohala**
- **Revised: Expanded to entire Island of Hawai'i, included new systems**
- **Data collected: solar contractor, system cost, utility bills, household size, tank and collector size, geographic location, unusual activities, satisfaction**

# 14 Participating Contractors



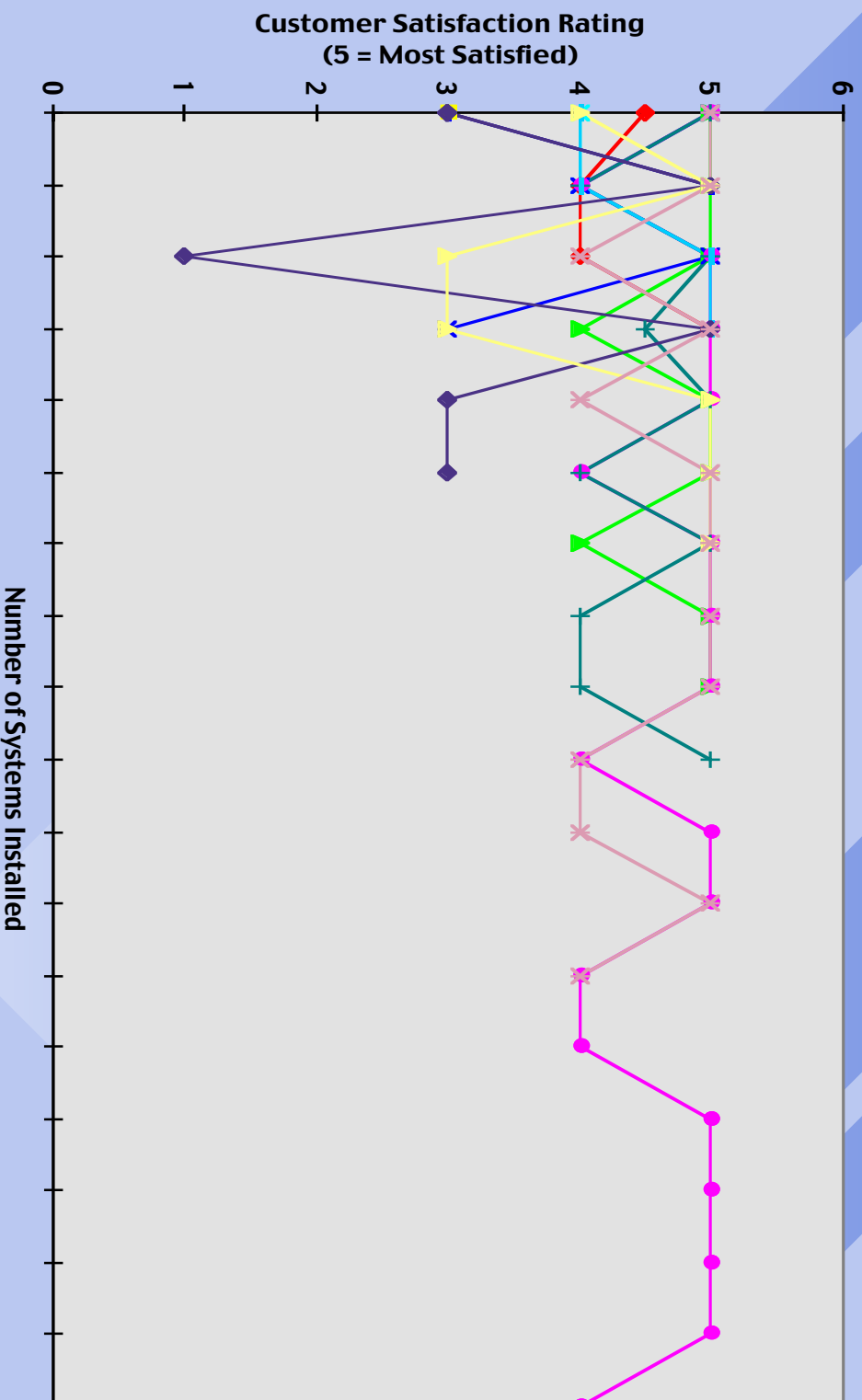
# Location of Installations



# Customer Satisfaction

- **Rated on 0-5 scale (5 is highest)**
- **Satisfaction ratings for:**
  - **Installer — Average 4.43**
  - **Solar System — Average 4.67**
  - **Na Makani Program — Average 4.79**
- **General comments also noted**

# Satisfaction with Installer



# Comments on Installers

## ■ Positive Comments

- About 2 dozen remarks
- “Professional”
- “Good follow-up”
- “Excellent workmanship”
- “Friendly”
- “Great job”
- “Worked very hard”

## ■ Critical Comments

- About 2 dozen remarks
- “No follow-up”
- “Leaks”
- “Messy”
- “Slow”
- “Incomplete”
- “Need more info — how to run system”



# Other Comments

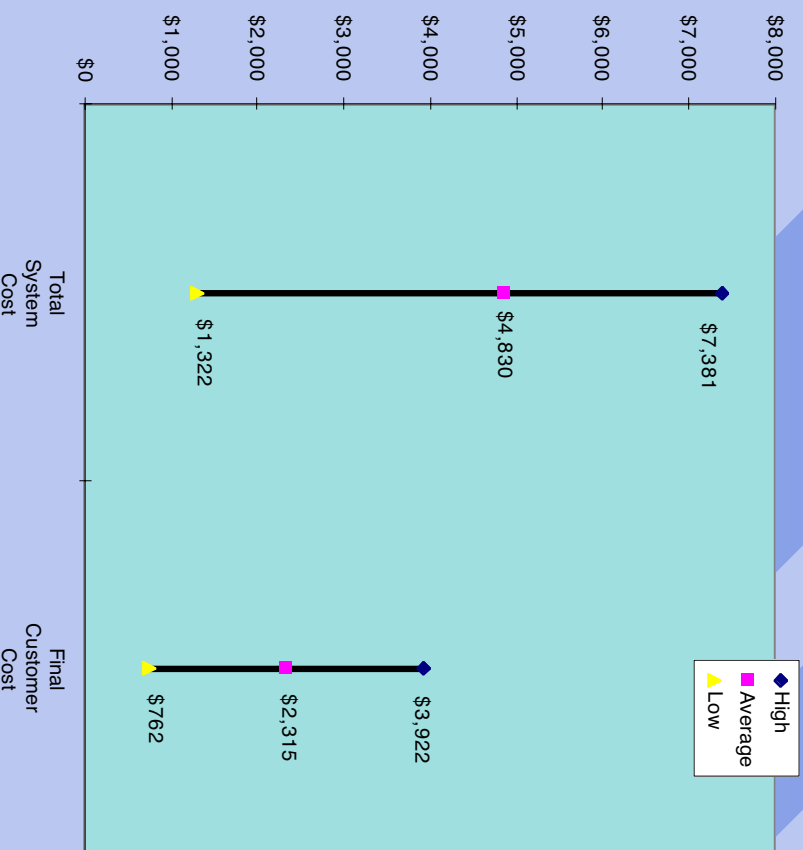
## ■ Positive

- plenty of hot water
- bill decreased significantly
- helping environment
- supports more government incentives, policies & programs

## ■ Critical

- not enough hot water
- savings not as much as hoped
- water scalding toddler
- community association rules prevented rooftop tank

# Wide Range in System Costs



## ■ Total System Cost

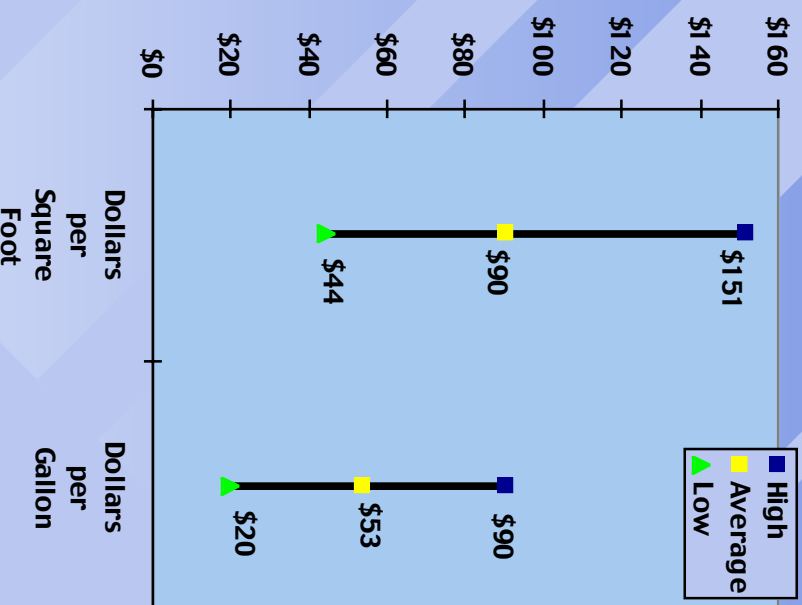
- high: \$7,381
- average: \$4,830
- low: \$1,322

## ■ Final Customer Cost

- high: \$3,922
- average: \$2,315
- low: \$762

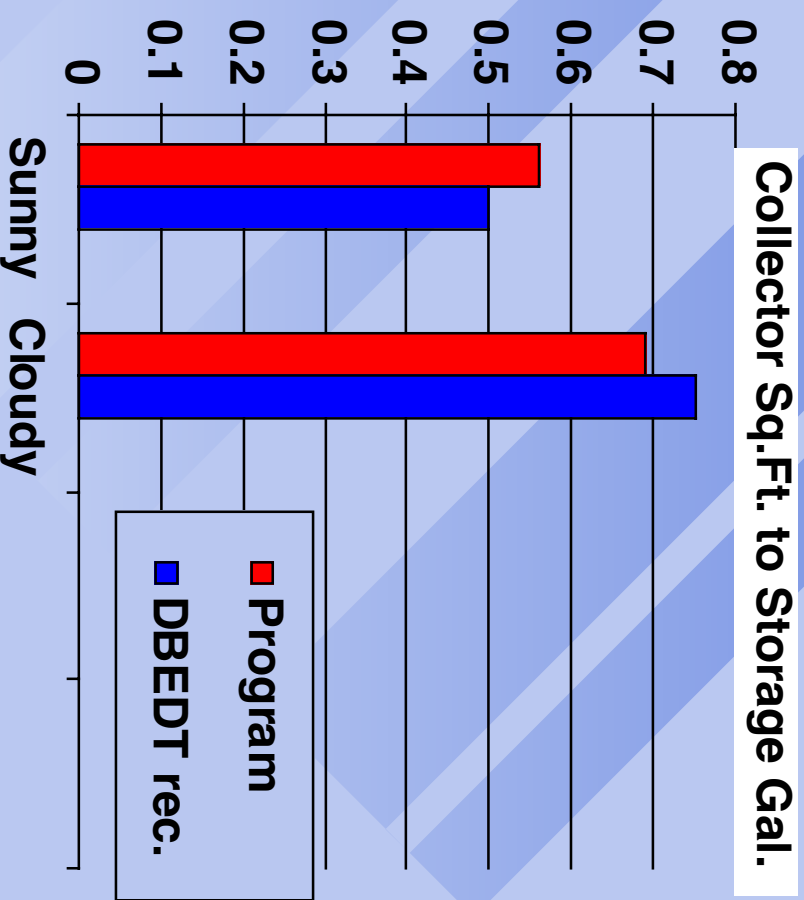
# Wide Range of Unit Costs

- Analyze cost in dollars per unit
  - square foot of collector
  - gallon of storage
- Reduces differences based on system size
- Still a wide range



# System Sizing

- **90% have between 20-40 gallons per person in storage (DBEDT rec.)**
- **2 systems undersized**
- **6 systems oversized**
- **Fairly consistent sizing of collector to storage volume**



# Savings over 15 Years

- **Aggregate:  $\geq 4,865$  barrels of oil**
- **Aggregate:  $\geq 2,661,000$  kWh**
- **Per Customer:**
  - **High: \$16,813**
  - **Most Probable: \$2,000 - \$6,000**
  - **Low: marginal, if any**
- **Data Limitations: 2 months before/after**

# Life Cycle Cost Analysis

- **BLCC software from FEMP, 4/1/02**
- **Assumed SWH systems were financed**
  - **5.6% discount rate**
- **Assumed HELCO rates at \$0.185/kWh**
  - **drop in 2002, 2003, 2004**
  - **then rise ~ 2%/year**
- **Assumed OM&R minimal**

# Life Cycle Cost Results

- **LCC Only for Retrofits**
  - **57 of 85 systems**
  - **not new construction** (no “before” data)
  - **not “energy services” installations**
  - **18 systems — 33% — little or no savings**
  - **3 bills increased — probably weather related**
  - **6 systems apparently oversized**
- **Solar Saves ~ 22% of Electric Bill**

# Lessons Learned

- **Customers are happy**
- **Customers are not shopping around**
- **Installers can improve, especially communication with customer**
- **Some happy customers may not be “best” solar owners**
- **Motives: savings, environment, politics**
- **Take data for longer period**



# Questions?

- **Andrea T. Gill, Energy Conservation Analyst**
- **Hawaii Energy Extension Service**
- **DBEDT Energy, Resources, and Technology Division**
- **99 Aupuni Street #101B  
Hilo, Hawaii 96720**
- **Voice: 808-933-0312      Fax: 808-933-0313**
- **[agill@interpac.net](mailto:agill@interpac.net)**