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CEO says Honolulu Seawater A/C project to start construction in August 2015

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The long-planned \$250 million **Honolulu Seawater Air Conditioning** project, which will cool Downtown Honolulu office buildings and condominium towers with cold water from the ocean, is slated to start construction by Aug. 1, 2015, and be operational by the first quarter of 2017, the head of the company said Wednesday.

[Eric Masutomi](#), president and CEO of Honolulu Seawater Air Conditioning — who also was a panelist at the Asia-Pacific Resilience Innovation Summit and Expo in Honolulu that covered the topic of seawater air conditioning — said that all of the project's permits have been filed and the majority of them have been approved.

However, some still question if the project is ever going to happen, and Masutomi noted that this question is one he is asked frequently.

"It has taken us a while to get to this stage," he said. "One person compared us to a purple unicorn, [saying] it will never happen. I'm here to tell you that it will happen."

The dilemma for Honolulu Seawater A/C is getting customers signed up.

"The rumors of the project not happening hasn't helped our cause, but we are engaging a strong marketing plan, offering pretty attractive incentives to motivate building [owners] downtown to sign up now rather than waiting until later," Masutomi said. "Once capacity is reached, that's it. It's improbable that it can be expanded. If you wait, you will be looking at higher rates and if nothing else, it's questionable about the availability of supply."

The Honolulu Seawater Air Conditioning project, which has signed up such customers as the Prince

Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, **Hawaiian Electric Co.**, Finance Factors Ltd., First Hawaiian Center, One Waterfront Towers and Remington College, has capacity for about half the buildings in Downtown Honolulu.

The system will provide air conditioning to buildings in Downtown Honolulu by [pumping deep ocean water through a pipeline](#) more than four miles offshore to a cooling station in Kakaako.

The projects reducing electricity usage is the equivalent of a 30-megawatt wind farm or a 42-megawatt solar energy farm.

Duane Shimogawa covers energy, real estate and economic development for Pacific Business News.