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Green meets with Las Vegas Raiders officials

The governor is taking another industry meeting in the town where the Pittsburgh Steelers will be playing the home team

By Andrew Gomes
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Gov. Josh Green, a lifelong, ardent Pittsburgh Steelers fan, may be attending his team's game today in Nevada against the Las Vegas Raiders in connection with a sports tourism work trip.

This is the second straight year that Green, who became governor in December 2022, has gone to Nevada for industry meetings when the Steelers visited Las Vegas to play the Raiders.

The governor's office on Thursday evening sent out a media advisory saying Green "will travel to Nevada on Thursday, October 10, to learn about sports tourism." No other information about the trip was included.

Makana McClellan, director of communications for Green's office, on Friday said the governor has a full work agenda in Las Vegas focused on sports tourism and economic development initiatives during the trip through Tuesday.

Trip events, she said, include a presentation on stadium financing with Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority officials, a tour of a hospitality, gaming and entertainment innovation center at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and a tour of a Tesla-based underground transportation tunnel system called the Las Vegas Convention Center Loop slated for major expansion under the city.

Green's schedule also includes a tour of the UFC mixed martial arts organization headquarters, a tour of the Raiders headquarters and practice facility, and a meeting with Carpenters Union of America representatives on the challenges of

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Amanda Pump, CEO of Child & Family Service, left, and Program Director Rosanna Daniel-Kanetake played with Izzy, a 6-year-old English Labrador Tuesday at a pet-friendly domestic violence shelter.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Program shelters victims and their pets

By Allison Schaefers
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Domestic violence survivor Hazel Rios remembers how love for her three dogs helped to trap her in a cycle of violence with an abuser, who harmed her for years — at times beating her with a weed whacker, a baseball bat, chairs, 2-by-4s and even rocks.

"I had three kids and three dogs, a pit bull and two purebred Pomeranians. When I would try to leave my abuser, he would grab one or more of my dogs. So even if I left him, I would be missing my pets and always come back home," Rios said. "I knew he was being mean to my dogs, abusing them, because he would hurt them to hurt me."

Rios finally found the right moment about a year ago to escape with her children and her dogs, only to find that Hawaii island's domestic violence shelter would not allow her to bring her pets. She found a pet-sitting agency but struggled to pay the costs, and eventually lost the dogs.

The loss of her animals has left a hole in Rios' heart, though she has come far in other aspects of her life. She now has her own place, a job and is pursuing a degree in social services so that she can help other women in abusive situations. But she might have gotten there sooner if her pet challenges were addressed.

Stories like Rios' are why Child & Family Service, known as CFS, got a grant earlier this year and will soon launch Our House of Hope: Pet Place, which will allow survivors to bring their pets to participating shelters where CFS is building pet kennels to hold them.

Amanda Pump, CFS president and CEO, said the pet program, which was funded through a grant from the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Violence Against Women, was created to remove the barrier that survivors with pets face in leaving since many shelters will not allow animals, as well as to ensure that domestic violence treatment is inclusive.

She said the agency's other pet program partners include the Hawaiian Humane Society, Hawaii FI-Do Service Dogs and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, commonly referred to as SPCA.

"Not only will we be able to house the pets, but we'll be able to work with the Hawaiian Humane Society to get them the vaccinations that they need, and the SPCA will also offer vaccinations and checkups for the animals," Pump said. "Hawaii Fi-Do has offered behavioral classes because we know if pets get abused, they are going to have anxiety and maybe snarl or bark. We want

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Hawaii Fi-Do to come and help provide that behavioral support for the pets, and that will only increase the options for survivors to get into a house if they have a well-cared-for pet. We are super excited about that project, and I think it's the first one in Hawaii that offers that expansive service with collaboration to help support pets."

Direct correlation

Pump said research shows that abusers often harm pets as a means of control, or survivors are reluctant to leave abusive situations because they cannot bring their pets with them. That's why CFS recognizes that a holistic approach to dealing with domestic and intimate partner abuse should address pets, she said.

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Sheltering pets of domestic violence survivors helps ensure the whole family — including pets — can get the services they need heal from an abusive situation. Animal rights activists gathered Friday in front of District Court to advocate for prosecution of animal abuse cases before the statute of limitations runs out. They held signs for a 14-year-old dog named Max who was rescued but died on Aug. 12 after a lifetime of abuse by his original owner, who was charged with second-degree cruelty to animals; the case was dismissed without prejudice on Sept. 17.

Hawaii seawater to become jet fuel

By Andrew Gomes
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Imagine an aircraft carrier being able to turn seawater into an endless supply of fuel for fighter jets.

A Texas company backed by the U.S. Office of Naval Research plans to do some potentially groundbreaking work on the process of making jet fuel from seawater at a state technology park on Hawaii island.

Sea Dragon Energy Inc. is proposing a research and development project to make small quantities of jet fuel from seawater and hydrogen at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority.

The work is expected to cost about $16 million and last two to five years. Success, if realized, could advance the scientifically sound concept of creating fuel solely from elements in seawater closer to commercialization.

"This is a major step on the path toward truly sustainable aviation fuel for both government and commercial use," John Kohut, Sea Dragon's chairman and CEO, said in a statement in August after the Office of Naval Research awarded the company a $19.2 million contract to design and build the testing unit.

In September, the company published a draft environmental assessment as part of its plan to do the research and development work in a warehouse, office and lab complex formerly occupied by a company that used the tech park's source of deep seawater off Kailua-Kona to produce desalinated bottled drinking water and research on health products derived from nutrient-rich seawater drawn from 3,000 feet below the surface.

Laurence Sombardier, NELHA's deputy director, said the agency's tech park is ideally suited for developing innovative technologies

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ON VACATION:
Christine Donnelly is off. Kokua Line will return Tuesday.

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The Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority on Hawaii island was developed with pipes that draw ocean water from the deep ocean, making the tech park an ideal setting for a company that aims to advance work on producing jet fuel from seawater.

JET FUEL

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in the areas of ocean science and renewable energy.

"The concept is indeed very novel, utilizes the park's marine resources and while the technology is in its infancy, producing fuel from sea water could be of high interest to island nations and communities," Sombardier said in an email.

Advancing technology

Sea Dragon's plan is to produce one roughly 10-gallon batch of jet fuel per month. An analysis of each batch would inform adjustments to production variables and improvements to equipment for subsequent batches.

Methods to make jet fuel from seawater have been understood and demonstrated for many years, but are far from feasible large-scale production.

Essentially, the process removes carbon dioxide and hydrogen from water and converts those two gases into a synthetic liquid hydrocarbon fuel.

According to the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, one of the lab's research chemists developed one such process that received the top honor in 2014 from Popular Science magazine.

Fuel made from that process, referred to as an Electrolytic-Cation Exchange Module, was used at the time to fly an off-the-shelf radio-controlled aircraft powered by an unmodified two-stroke internal combustion engine, the lab said.

However, designing catalysts needed to efficiently use the process to make lots of jet fuel has been difficult and costly, according to the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Rochester, which in 2021 received $300,000 from the Office of Naval Research to improve the process.

The same proprietary and patented Naval Research Lab process is part of what Sea Dragon is to use in its planned work, though the company would obtain hydrogen from the tech park or another supplier instead of using electricity to extract it from seawater.

Extracting hydrogen from water is not the big challenge to advance the goal of making jet fuel from seawater, but removing carbon dioxide and efficiently producing the fuel from the two gases is.

"In general, they are fairly energetic processes and difficult," said Richard Rocheleau, director of the Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute at the University of Hawaii. "They require a good bit of energy."

Rocheleau said the Big Island tech park provides advantages for trying to advance seawater-to-jet fuel work because of the infrastructure there and the relative purity of the seawater.

Production steps

To make a 10-gallon batch of jet fuel, Sea Dragon would use roughly 449,000 gallons of seawater, 50,000 gallons of fresh water and 154 pounds of hydrogen in an initial step to remove most of the carbon dioxide from the water, which the company said would contain no pollutants and be deposited into the ocean through the tech park pipe system.

A second step would involve using hydrogen and electricity to convert the carbon dioxide into carbon monoxide, a process the company said would generate 80 gallons of water expected to be similar in quality to tap water. This water would be tested to ensure it can be recycled, or treated before disposal if necessary.

A third step would use metal catalysts and electricity to convert the carbon monoxide with hydrogen into synthetic petroleum. Sea Dragon said in its draft environmental assessment that byproducts in this step would be water of the same quality as in the prior step along with a small amount of hydrocarbon gases that would be combusted as a low-flow flare.

The last step would be to refine the synthetic petroleum into jet fuel using hydrogen and electricity. Hydrocarbon gases also would be a byproduct of this step and combusted as a low-flow flare. Sea Dragon said in its environmental report that such gases from the third and fourth steps would be equivalent to one gallon of fuel.

The company also said that the jet fuel will be tested, stored indoors with spill protection, and limited to no more than 120 gallons stored.

Ambitious goals

If the work is successful, it would help with possible development of a larger mobile fuel production unit. One ultimate goal is to create commercial-scale production units that could be installed in places including remote locations and on aircraft carriers.

According to Sea Dragon, preliminary studies suggest that a seaborne version of such a unit could sustain operations of a carrier strike group indefinitely, creating a huge advantage for the Navy.

The company also touts other benefits from feasible commercial production if it is one day achieved.

"SDEI believes that decentralizing and distributing energy production and storage will increase resiliency, support sustained renewable generation growth, and help address the challenges of climate change through a range of potential applications in the private and public sectors," Sea Dragon said in the draft environmental report.

If the environmental review and permitting proceed without complications, Sea Dragon anticipates that research and development operations could begin in 2026.

NATIONAL RESEARCH LAB

A scientist at NELHA removes carbon dioxide and hydrogen from water to create a synthetic liquid hydrocarbon fuel through an Electrolytic-Cation Exchange Module.

PETS

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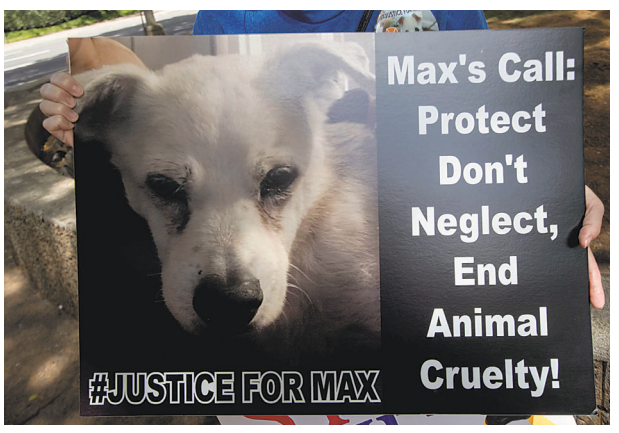
"There certainly is a direct correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence. Animals are also used as a lever for survivors to stay in the home of the abuser," Pump said.

She added that over the last 20 to 30 years, CFS has frequently heard survivors refuse shelter services because they didn't want to leave a pet.

Rios said, "The new Child & Family Service program that finds kennels for pets of abused people, and helps ensure the pets are healthy, is amazing and will really save a lot of people and their animals that are being abused. It will help big time! It would have saved me an entire year of domestic violence if I could have gotten my dogs out when I first tried to leave my abuser."

Pump said the goal is to expand the pet program over the next three years and hopefully garner enough support to keep it running, she said.

"Helping the survivor, her family and adding the pets to the equation creates an increase to the cost of services for social service providers, and most domestic violence programs already are struggling now with the cost of serving people," she said. "It's definitely a financial versus ethical dilemma, but the hope is that the government and donors see this need and can help ensure the whole family — including pets — can get the services they need to leave an abusive situation as they start to heal from this trauma."



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Animal rights advocates gathered in front District Court Friday. Their rally included trying to get the prosecutor's office to reopen Max's case.

Our House of Hope: Pet Place comes as pet advocates are bringing a heightened sense of awareness to abuse against pets.

Activists on Friday stood up for abused pets by picketing in front of the Honolulu District courthouse for several hours. Their actions follow efforts by a state lawmaker and animal advocates to get Honolulu police and the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney to reopen an animal cruelty case connected to the death of a 14-year-old terrier mix named Max.

Rachelle Teruya, project manager for Hina's Legacy, who was on the sidewalk fronting the courthouse, carried a sign that said "#Justice For Max, Max's Call: Protect Don't Neglect, End Animal Cruelty!"

Teruya was one of four foster moms who adopted Max after the senior dog was rescued on July 6, and tried to help him heal from his injuries. She said he died on Aug. 12, and the case against his alleged abuser was dropped Sept. 17.

"I still have Max's blanket in the car," Teruya said. "We want to see the case reopened. We believe there is enough evidence. We need more awareness about the prevalence of animal abuse in our community. The investigators are making strong cases and the prosecutors are not following through."

Teruya said there is a high correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence, which also is a serious community concern.

"It's really sad. If you look at the statistics (ASPCA research), it shows that 71% of women, who were abused, reported that their abuser threatened or harmed a family pet," she said.

Escalating incidents

Pump said the pet program also comes as the community is grappling with rising incidents of domestic and intimate partner violence and increases in severity.

"Domestic violence impacts everyone — including businesses — and that is why it is imperative we come together as a community to fight it," she said. "We must do this holistically."

Pump said there has been an uptick in domestic violence and in the severity of the violence in Hawaii, according to a 2022 report from the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence called "SCARS ON THE HEART: Barriers to Safety for Survivors of Domestic Violence.

"The report showed that incidence of intimate partner violence (or IPV) in Hawaii could reach approximately 200,000 residents who have experienced IPV at any given time within the last five years," she said.

She said 12% of those surveyed reported that they had something thrown at them or were hit with something, and some 5% had been strangled, choked or suffocated.

Pump said as a result, shelter occupancy at CFS increased by 18%, and the number of calls received by the CFS hotline increased by 16% in the past year.

Hawaiian Humane Society President and CEO Anna Neubauer said the pet program is a natural extension of its shared history with CFS.

"Our original founding, we were here to support unwed mothers, children and animals, and then we ended up as the Hawaiian Humane Society focusing our efforts on animal welfare and that was how Child & Family Service originated when they took on the human component, the women and children component," Neubauer said.

She said the pet program is needed, and recalled a case from just a few days ago where animals were surrendered following household violence.

"The woman had visible bruising on her and said she was surrendering three animals to us because of domestic violence, which was just heartbreaking," Neubauer said. "She didn't want to but she didn't feel they were safe. Oftentimes, the abuser will use the animal and threaten to harm the animal to get at the victim and they follow through with that, and so we've had many cases where the animal has been abused alongside the woman."

Behavioral support

Susan Luehrs, founder and board chair of Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs, said the nonprofit plans to provide CFS' clients with behavioral support for their dogs, who may be suffering from anxiety and fear too.

"We will teach them to see the signs of stress and fear in their dogs, and coping techniques," Luehrs said. "We'll teach them how to train their dogs, how to keep them healthy and how to prevent bites."

Luehrs said a goal of the training is to ensure that the dogs are well behaved so that owners do not face difficulty in the shelters or in keeping their dogs once they leave the shelter.

"That's the beauty of this program — it helps folks get their lives back without one more thing to have to worry about," she said. "It also keeps owners and pets together, which is very healing."

GREEN

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home building, workforce development and infrastructure financing.

If Green goes to the Steelers game, it would be on his personal time, McClellan added.

James Kunane Tokioka, who accompanied Green during part of the 6-day trip, said on Friday from Las Vegas that he had just finished a meeting with Raiders officials who donated $50,000 for Hawaii high school flag football and explored the possibility of hosting a "home" game for the University of Hawaii football team at Allegiant Stadium.

"That's in the very early stages," Tokioka said of the prospect of a UH game in the 4-year-old stadium where the Raiders and UNLV Rebels play. He said cost could be an issue for such a game, but that interest from Hawaii residents would certainly be high. UH has been playing home games on an upgraded practice field on campus in Manoa after state officials shuttered Aloha Stadium in 2021. A private developer is supposed to build a replacement by 2028.

Tokioka was scheduled to return to Hawaii Saturday, and expects Green to attend the Steelers game. "Sunday's his day off. I'm certain he'll be at the game," Tokioka said.

A little over a year ago, Green also traveled to Nevada to meet with various business and trade industry leaders from Sept. 21 to 25. On Sept. 24, 2023, the Steelers played the Raiders in Las Vegas. Green's team won, 23-18.

Business and government leaders, especially those who regularly travel for work, intersperse leisure events during work trips on their personal time and expense.

In connection with another work trip last year, Green carved out time for a personal trip to his hometown of Pittsburgh. That trip was to Washington, D.C., on Oct. 24 for meetings and events with federal officials, including President Joseph Biden. Green's office said the governor and first lady Jaime Kanani Green were stopping in Pittsburgh for a personal visit Oct. 27 before returning to Honolulu Oct. 30. On Oct. 29, the Steelers played the Jacksonville Jaguars in Pittsburgh. Green's team lost that game, 10-20.

Green was raised in Pittsburgh, earned an undergraduate degree at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania and a medical degree at Penn State. In 2000, he moved to Hawaii island to practice medicine in rural Kau, and later became a state lawmaker and then lieutenant governor before becoming governor. For all his life, he has been a Steelers fan, and a proud one with Steelers-branded merchandise displayed in his office at the state Capitol.

"I'm a Steelers fan because genetically, it was programmed in me through my parents," he told Hawaii News Now in a 2021 interview, during which he showed off his team's "Terrible Towel" rally instrument. "And I was born Feb. 11, 1970, shortly after we drafted (defensive tackle) 'Mean' Joe Greene, and I've never looked back."

In the interview, Green predicted his team would be in the Super Bowl in 2022. The Steelers have played in eight Super Bowls and won six. Their last Super Bowl was in 2011, a 25-31 loss to the Green Bay Packers.