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# Raising Islands--Hawai'i science and environment

THE source of news about science and the environment as they relate to the Hawaiian Islands, hosted by veteran science reporter Jan TenBruggencate. Issues covered include archaeology, astronomy, botany, climate science, conservation, efficient transportation, geology, marine sciences, sustainability and zoology, with occasional forays into other areas, including traditional navigation and canoe voyaging.

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## Lingle: Hawai'i electric car network under discussion

A new electric car network that's being adopted in Israel and Denmark could find a place in Hawai'i.



Gov. Linda Lingle said the state is in discussions with an organization called Project Better Place, which in recent months has announced partnerships with Israel and Denmark to establish charging stations and battery swapping networks. (See [www.projectbetterplace.com](http://www.projectbetterplace.com).)

The California-based firm has also made a deal with Nissan-Renault to design a car that will work with its network. ([www.renault.com/renault\\_com/en/main/30\\_DEVELOPPEMENT\\_DURABLE/40\\_Performances/20\\_Environnement/Vehicule\\_electrique/index.aspx](http://www.renault.com/renault_com/en/main/30_DEVELOPPEMENT_DURABLE/40_Performances/20_Environnement/Vehicule_electrique/index.aspx))

(Photo: Renault-Nissan could build its electric car on the platform of its Megane Sedan. Renault-Nissan photo.)

Lingle, on her April 19 radio show with host Mike Buck on KHVH, said the concept—at least the one proposed for Israel—does not require any government funding. She said Israel is committed to switching entirely to electric cars within five years.

“We are also in discussions with the same organization. It's to create a society where you don't need to use oil or gasoline,” Lingle said.

One economic benefit: A significant portion of the \$5 billion Hawaii sends out of state for oil each year would stay at home.

According to a Hawaiian Electric report, nearly 20 percent of Hawai'i's oil imports are for ground transportation. The 2000 oil use breakdown, available at [www.heco.com/vcmcontent/FileScan/PDFConvert/FuelOil.pdf](http://www.heco.com/vcmcontent/FileScan/PDFConvert/FuelOil.pdf), was

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36.9 percent for air transportation, 29.8 percent for electricity, 18.8 percent for ground transportation, 7.4 percent for marine transportation and 7.2 percent for other uses.

Project Better Place's web site says it will be able to deliver folks an efficient, convenient transportation that is cheaper than one using fossil fuels.

"We have crossed a historic threshold where electricity and batteries provide a cheaper alternative for consumers. Existing technology, coupled with the right business model and a scaleable infrastructure can provide an immediate solution and significantly decrease carbon emissions," said Shai Agassi, Project Better Place executive, at the firm's rollout last year.

Among the benefits of electric cars is that they can more easily take advantage of intermittent forms of carbon-free electrical generation—like wind plants and solar arrays—than utility grids can. Much of the charging can take place when the wind is blowing and when the sun is shining.

Here's what Project Better Place says about its system:

"The business model for the electric cars will be similar to that used by mobile phone operators. In the same way that wireless operators deploy a network of cell towers to provide an area of mobile phone coverage, Project Better Place will establish a network of charging spots and battery exchange stations to provide ubiquitous access to electricity to power electric vehicles.

"The company will partner with car makers and source batteries so that consumers who subscribe to the network can get subsidized vehicles which are cheaper to buy and operate than today's fuel-based cars. Consumers will still own their cars and will have multiple car models to choose from.

"Project Better Place will deploy and test this framework over the next 24 months in a variety of launch markets, after which it plans to deploy hundreds of thousands of vehicles annually, across multiple markets. The company anticipates achieving tipping-point saturation in early markets within 10 years of rollout."

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Posted by Jan T at 11:36 AM

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