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## **Hawaii works on making renewable energy practical**

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HONOLULU (AP) -- A \$15 million federal project on Maui will focus on finding better ways to bring wind power to people's homes and to make it a more reliable alternative energy source.

The U.S. Department of Energy announced Monday it has chosen a team of power companies to work on integrating renewable energy sources into the Maui power grid.

It's one of nine projects nationwide selected by the federal government to modernize the nation's electricity grid.

A goal of the project, led by the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute and the University of Hawaii, also is to reduce peak electricity demand by at least 15 percent in three years.

"It will help us all understand the technical issues needed to create smarter, more flexible electrical systems," said Kevin Kolevar, assistant secretary for electricity delivery and energy reliability for the U.S. Department of Energy. "We can make them work together for a new kind of grid."

The project will be funded with a \$7 million federal investment and an \$8 million contribution from the power companies on the team, which include General Electric, Hawaiian Electric, Maui Electric and UPC Wind.

Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle said the islands need to take advantage of their abundant energy-producing natural resources.

"This project will help set the foundation to improve the reliability and efficiency of Hawaii's electric grid system while allowing greater utilization of renewable energy sources," Lingle said.

Hawaii imports 90 percent of its energy from foreign sources. A partnership between the state and the U.S. Department of Energy announced in January aims to have Hawaii produce at least 70 percent of its own energy by 2030.

The \$15 million will be used to buy new equipment for use at the Maui Lani Substation and research energy storage, responsive loads and distributed generation.

"This is really moving toward the future. We're trying to stabilize the grid as we put in more intermittent, as-available resources," said Terry Surles, a University of Hawaii researcher with the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute. "It's a combination of new technologies."

As part of Hawaii's deal with the Department of Energy, UPC Wind Partners' Kaheawa Wind Farm on Maui signed an agreement last month to increase the integration of wind energy into Hawaii's utility system.