

Insular Plan for Alternative and Renewable Energy (IPARE)

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Background: During the winter of 2010 Assistant Secretary Babauta initiated a comprehensive renewable energy planning initiative for the U.S. territories by holding two separate CEO level Renewable Energy Symposiums at the world renown National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Golden, Colorado. Guided by the expertise of NREL's staff, the island governors were invited to examine new ways to solve some of the most pressing energy and economic problems facing their islands.

The goal was to generate enthusiasm and support for renewable energy and it succeeded. Recognizing the unique environmental constraints of fragile and isolated islands, Assistant Secretary Babauta insisted that renewable energy projects supported by OIA funding should be based on sound planning, tested technology and scientific research. He committed to supporting island communities in the production of individualized strategic energy plans that would address their unique energy opportunities and challenges. Given that the islands are 100% dependent on expensive fossil fuel, territorial governors wholeheartedly welcomed the strong leadership and commitment.

In the Caribbean, the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) was fortunate to be selected by the International Partnership for Energy Development in Island Nations (EDIN) as a well funded pilot project for island renewable development. As such, the USVI leaped ahead pursuing a fast track for developing renewable energy projects with the guidance of NREL.

Time Line:

- In mid-2010: OIA entered an InterAgency Agreement with the DOE to engage the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to lead the energy planning effort.
- Summer 2010: Pacific territorial governors issued Executive Orders establishing Energy Steering Committees, appointed members to those committees and with the input of those committees, issued Charters describing the work expected to emanate from those committees.
- Fall and winter 2010: NREL teams visited each of the Pacific territories to conduct energy assessments and meet with the communities in preparation for completing comprehensive technical energy assessment reports for each territory, identifying the most viable/promising renewable energy resources in preparation for issuing Technical Energy Assessment Reports for each territory.
- Spring and summer 2011: Assistant Secretary Babauta and the respective Governors of the Pacific territories held televised press conferences when each of the Technical Energy Assessments were officially presented to the governors and simultaneously electronically published. Below are the links to those reports.

1. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy11osti/50905.pdf> American Samoa
2. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy11osti/50906.pdf> CNMI
3. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy11osti/50580.pdf> Guam

- Summer 2011: Based on the Technical Energy Assessments and requests from the islands, OIA awarded Energy Empowerment Grants to each of the Pacific territories:
 1. The University of Guam was awarded \$900,000 from OIA's Empowering Insular Communities Program. The grant will fund a solar and wind energy project at the University of Guam to reduce the UOG's reliance on fossil fuels by 2-5%.
 2. The American Samoa Power Authority was awarded \$600,000 for three renewable projects to assist the isolated islands in energy efficiency effort through establishing a recycling program, implementing a compact fluorescent light bulb program, and the installation of prepaid meters.
 3. The CNMI received \$1.2M in CIP funds for drilling of geothermal gradient holes. In conjunction with that the CNMI received \$500,000 for a geophysical survey that will be useful in guiding the geothermal gradient drilling and will shorten the time table for exploration and development if the results are favorable.
- Winter 2011: Draft Strategic Energy Plans were completed by NREL and presented to the energy committees in each Pacific territory. Those plans are currently being reviewed and receiving substantial community input asking that they be converted to road maps that include specific action plans for implementing pilot projects as well as larger commercial endeavors.

Job Creation: Island communities are disproportionately affected by high prices of fuel and shipping costs and oftentimes find themselves at the mercy of the global energy giants. Virtually all of the money spent for fossil fuel production leaves the islands. Energy efficiency and renewable energy is, on the other hand, home grown, creating jobs locally that run the gamut from professional engineers and chemists to heavy construction and crane operators, to energy auditors and technicians to semi-skilled construction and agricultural workers. The potential for job creation is substantial, especially in biomass and waste-to-energy operations that create approximately five jobs for each megawatt of power produced. Many of the renewable energy jobs will be trade school or community college level positions which are greatly needed in the islands. Sustainable energy dollars are much more likely to stay on the island to circulate in the economy than are those paid for fossil fuels which leave the islands.

Contacts: Nikolao Pula 202-208-4736 and Angela Williams 202-208-3003