



A Greener Future For Power Plants?

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(KHNL) - Power companies in Hawaii have plans to go "green." But some environmentalists are actually opposed to the idea.

Island power companies have a plan to use palm trees to fuel future power plants, which is a greener way to go than gas.

The interest trees like the oil palm tree or the kukui is mainly in the nut, which has a high oil content and just as important, it is easy to extract.

If hawaiian electric get its way, tree crops could power some of its plants.

That would not only reduce our dependence on imported oil, but could also force Island farmers to change their crops. "Potentially this could change the crop grown on maui, and branch out to the big island and molokai and oahu." says Maui Electric Company's Ed Reinhardt.

While many want to go green, some feel under this new plan, we still wouldn't be outgrowing our dependence on oil.

"We would be importing not traditional oil , but another kind of oil, its just a substitution that we are not self reliant." says Kat Brady, with the Life of the Land, a Hawaii focused environmental group.



Ed Reinhardt



Kat Brady





Using bio-diesel to power plants in the islands would reduce carbon dioxide emissions that add to global warming. But even the electric company admits, there aren't enough farmers to grow the bio-diesel crop needed to fuel a planned new refinery and the modified power plants on several islands.

"We probably will not have enough of the raw product to turn into bio-diesel." adds Reinhardt.



So palm oil or other plant oils would still need to be imported to our islands, leaving some hoping "plants" are left out of future "power plants" for Hawaii.

"Hawaii has every resource known to mankind to produce our own energy, deep cold ocean, constant sunshine, trade winds why are we using our ag lands to grow energy crops?"

Hawaiian Electric's power plan, of a bio-refinery and bio-diesel plants is the first of its kind in the country for a utility.

There will be more meetings between Hawaiian Electric and the public, planned for Thursday 6/28 in Hilo, Friday 6/29 in Kona and Monday 7/2 on Maui.