

# The Big Wind Scam

## Part II

Opinion By Mike Bond

Opposition to the Big Wind industrial factory covering 11,000 acres of Molokai continues to intensify (93 percent against, at last count), as does opposition in Lanai and Maui. As one Maui kupuna said, just because Oahu lets its own canoe fall apart, that doesn't mean they can take ours, Lanai's and Maui's.

Big Wind's billions of dollars could be spent instead for the people of Hawaii. For its three billion dollar estimated cost (true cost will be much higher) we could install photo-voltaic power on 90,000 homes in Hawaii, saving 18 million barrels of oil (\$2 billion) – far more than Big Wind. It would create 1,200 new local jobs for at least five to six years – electricians, masons, carpenters, roofers, engineers, architects, project managers, and legal and other professions. By comparison, Big Wind will hire mostly mainland and foreign crews. Another 300 permanent local jobs would be created for the next 25-40 years for ongoing system installation and maintenance (Big Wind will create five-10 permanent jobs, mostly from elsewhere).

Or, for the same three billion dollars we could install solar hot water heaters on 500,000 homes in Hawaii. That would save 40 million barrels of oil (\$4.3 billion), and create over 4,000 new local jobs over a six-year period (electricians, plumbers, engineers, architects, project managers, and others). At least 150 permanent jobs would be created for 25-40 years.

Similar savings and true green energy could be biofuels, which could supply 70 percent of Hawaii's transportation fuels, creating 1,000 long-term jobs in Hawaii. Of Hawaii's 675,000 acres of prime agricultural land, only 200,000 acres are now being utilized. This would bring another 75,000 farm acres back into production, giving many farmers thousands of dollars income.

And for a fraction of Big Wind's cost we could implement the Hawaiian Energy Agreement requiring "the maximum possible levels of energy efficiency." Under the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative of 2008, energy efficiency could cut statewide electricity demand by 30 percent (495 megawatts) – more than the proposed industrial wind factories on Molokai and Lanai combined.

HECO opposes these alternatives because they lower its income. HECO doesn't care that they'd save Hawaiian electricity customers millions of dollars, and save all U.S. taxpayers wind power's tax scams and other subsidies. HECO doesn't even care that these alternatives would create thousands of new Hawaiian jobs.

Gov. Abercrombie has promised he will abide by the majority will of the people of Molokai in his decision for or against this project. That the vast majority opposes it is clear. Equally clear is that for far less cost we could have far better alternatives that don't destroy the magnificent beauty of our islands, and which bring thousands of jobs and income to our people.