



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

**U.S. Department  
of the Interior**

[www.doi.gov/oia](http://www.doi.gov/oia)  
**News Release**

Date: May 12, 2015

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**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas**

**Interior Awards \$2.4 million for Renewable Energy  
Geothermal and Solar Projects in the U.S. Pacific Territories**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 12, 2015) – Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia’aina this week announced \$2,374,000 in grant assistance under the Empowering Insular Communities (EIC) Program for various clean energy and energy-efficiency projects in American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The goal of the EIC Program is to help the insular areas implement high-priority projects identified in their respective strategic energy plans.

“I am pleased to support renewable energy projects that reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and help relieve the high cost burden of electricity in the region,” said Assistant Secretary Kia’aina. “Not only do these projects help build renewable energy infrastructure but they help these communities build climate change resiliency and self-sufficiency.”

**American Samoa Geothermal Drilling Program** - \$1,130,000 to support a slim hole drilling program to test for geothermal potential on the island of Tutuila in American Samoa. The American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA) in partnership with the Office of Insular Affairs and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory completed the geothermal resource assessment phase that provided promising results and recommended moving forward with an exploratory drilling program. The utility recently finished a comprehensive exploration drilling plan and hopes to complete the drilling by December 2015. Once developed, geothermal power can be produced as a baseload renewable energy resource, meaning it operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week regardless of changing weather. As a continuous source of clean energy, geothermal power is well suited as a potential alternative to diesel fuel on Tutuila.

**Manu'a 100% Renewable Energy Initiative** - \$378,262 to support the installation of a hybrid renewable energy system on the island of Ofu in the Manu'a Islands in American Samoa. The hybrid system will include a 341kilowatt (kW) photo-voltaic system along with a battery backup system integrated with the existing diesel generators. The project is an important first step in achieving the goal of making the Manu'a Islands powered 100% by clean energy. Once the hybrid system is installed, Ofu will receive up to 85% of its energy from solar power.

**Guam Memorial Hospital Solar Project** - \$500,000 to install a 100kW rooftop photo-voltaic power system at the hospital. As a facility that operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week, the hospital is one of the largest energy consumers in the territory. This project supports the Guam Strategic Energy and Action plans by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, improving renewable energy generation infrastructure, and progressing towards the 5% net power from renewable sources goal by December 2015, as required by Guam Public Law 29-62. The hospital estimates the project will result in energy cost savings of \$88,559 annually.

**Farmer's Cooperative Association in the Northern Mariana Islands** - \$366,407 to install a rooftop photo-voltaic power system at the Garapan Public Market as well as to implement energy efficiency measures to significantly reduce the power consumption of the market. The photo-voltaic power system is expected to supply about 50% of the market's power needs. The government-owned and sponsored Garapan Public Market serves as a central location for farmers and ranchers to market locally grown fresh produce to island residents and tourists.

*The Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas carries out the administrative responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior in coordinating federal policy for the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and administering and overseeing U.S. federal assistance to the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau under the Compacts of Free Association. The Assistant Secretary executes these responsibilities through the Office of Insular Affairs.*

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