

Hawaii Foreign Trade Zone looks at going off the grid with microgrid project

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The Honolulu-based Hawaii Foreign Trade-Zone No. 9 is looking to get entirely off the grid by developing its own microgrid system, the head of the state agency told PBN Thursday.

The trade zone, which aims to serve as the "hub of international trade" in the state, is looking for developers to help them with the project that would include utilizing 200,000 square feet of its total roof space.

Located near Downtown Honolulu, its five-acre warehouse facility sits on seven acres of land.

The trade zone's electricity costs account for about one-third of its operating budget, [David Sikkink](#), administrator for the state agency, told PBN.

"We have been looking at doing this for years," he said. "We would love it such that the FTZ would be a power producer and produce enough power to run its facility 24/7, to be able to capture and store power."

Some of its options include utilizing solar photovoltaic, wind or energy storage systems.

"What that looks like, not quite sure about that yet," Sikkink said. "We see it as multiphase, solar now, maybe wind later. The whole idea is to have our complete facility run by renewables."

He also noted that the trade zone could serve as an example of other state agencies in terms of this microgrid project.

"We're excited about this project and hope we get a lot of response," Sikkink said.

A request for information process has recently ended, and the trade zone is currently taking a look at the bids it received.

An official request for proposals is the eventual next step in the process.

Sikkink said that no development cost for the project has been determined, although he estimates that a 500-kilowatt system could support the trade zone.

The trade zone [recently opened](#) its Homer A. Maxey International Trade Resource Center, which includes 40 additional offices, ranging in size from 200 square feet to 5,000 square feet, as well as a conference center and a co-working space.

Duane Shimogawa covers energy, real estate and economic development for Pacific Business News.