



Gone with the wind

David Murdock's Lanai wind farm project worries both residents and visitors

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A proposed \$750 million power project that would erect 200 windmills next to Polihua Beach on Lanai troubles

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Bloomberg News

First, he ripped out the pineapples. Then he put up Four Seasons hotels and luxury homes. Next, he envisioned 200 windmills towering next to a Lanai beach.

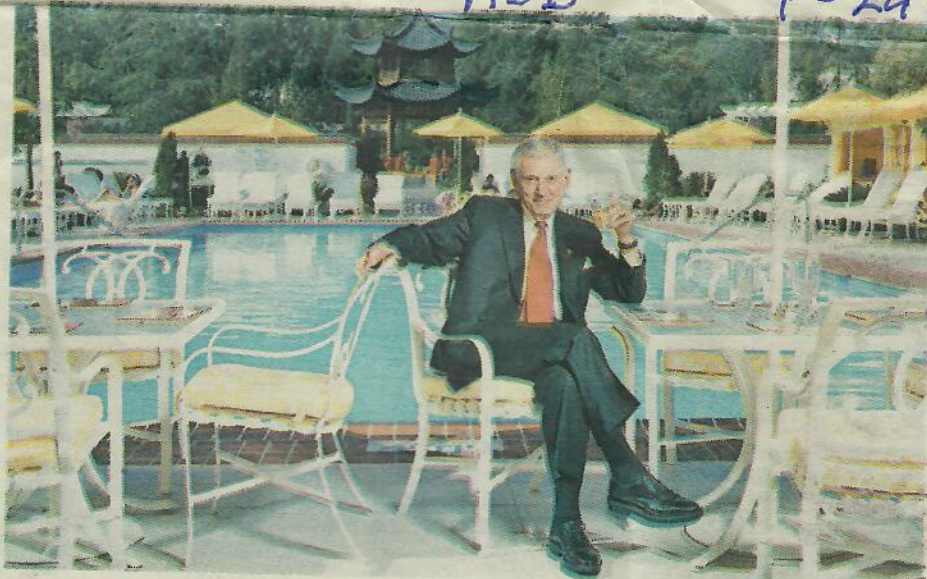
It's all the work of billionaire David Murdock. He turned the island into a tourist destination, said Waynette Kwon, director of the Lanai Visitors Bureau.

Lanai was mostly pineapple plantations and one 11-room hotel before Murdock's 1985 purchase of Castle & Cooke Inc., which owns 98 percent of the island. So successful was the transformation that Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, chose Lanai as the site of their wedding in 1994.

The aesthetics of the \$750 million power project trouble some visitors and residents. It would put 400-foot-tall wind turbines next to Polihua Beach, the longest white-sand stretch on the island.

"I am not going to live on an island that's the biggest wind farm in the Pacific," said John Mumford, 65, who owns a vacation home on Lanai. Mumford is founding partner of Crosspoint Venture Partners, a Woodside, Calif., venture-capital firm.

Having fields of windmills



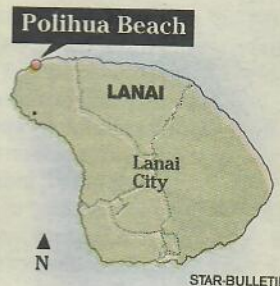
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David Murdock, owner of Dole Food Co., sits beside the pool of the Four Seasons hotel that houses his California Wellbeing Institute in Westlake Village, Calif.

nearby would erode the island's natural beauty, said Marc Masterson, 53, artistic director at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in Louisville, Ky. Masterson went fishing at Polihua a year ago.

Castle & Cooke plans to send windmill-generated electricity via undersea cable to Oahu. The company is waiting for government approvals, including environmental clearance.

Wind power could help make Lanai less dependent on real estate development and tourism, said Harry Saunders, president of Cas-



tle & Cooke Hawaii. Murdock lost more than \$60 million on Lanai in the past three years, he said.

"The island had no infras-

tructure," Saunders said. "Rebuilding it cost a lot of money."

Half of the adult population of about 2,200 works for Murdock properties, including the Experience at Koele and Challenge at Manele golf resorts, Saunders said. Attempts to reach Murdock for comment, with five e-mails and two voice mails to his spokesman, Marty Ordman, in the past three weeks, were unsuccessful.

The island was used mostly for grazing cattle until 1922, when it was bought for \$1.1 million by pineapple grower James Dole. He even-

visitors and residents.

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ually turned his Lanai land into the world's largest pineapple plantation, which eventually was absorbed into Los Angeles-based Castle & Cooke.

Geography might be destiny for Lanai. The state's islands are in the path of strong tradewinds, and the channel between Molokai and Lanai serves as a funnel, said Stan Calvert, team leader of wind technology applications at the U.S. Energy Department.

"It is the most impressive site I've ever been to for wind," he said.

Castle & Cooke probably will obtain all the necessary approvals by late 2011, said Ted Peck, energy administrator at the state Business, Economic Development and Tourism. The wind farm would move Hawaii toward its goal of being 70 percent green by 2030, he said.

That might be small comfort to the people of Lanai, who pay the highest electricity rate in the state and will not draw power from the windmills adjacent to their beach.

"It's a place a lot of people use for hunting deer, fishing and diving," said Robin Kaye, 62, a retired photographer who lives on Lanai. "Why should this island be the power generator for Oahu?"

"Let them build a wind farm there."