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A study by NEA completed in April 1987 showed that a large scale (500 MW) geothermal development on the big island of Hawaii and the inter-island power transmission cable is economically infeasible. This updated report, utilizing additional information available since 1987, reaches to the same conclusion:

- The state estimate of $1.7 billion for the geothermal construction and capital cost is low and extremely optimistic. More realistic capital costs are shown to be in the range of $3.4 to $4.3 billion and could go as high as $4.6 billion.
- Compared to alternative sources of power generation, geothermal can be 1.6 to 2.2 times as costly as oil, and 1.2 to 1.7 times as costly as a solar/oil generating system.
- Yearly operation and maintenance costs for the large scale geothermal project are estimated to be 44.7 million, 72% greater than a solar/oil generating system.
- Over a 40-year period rate payers could pay, on average between 1.9 and 2.7 cents per kWh per year more for electricity than they are currently paying (even with oil prices stabilizing at $45 per barrel in 2010).
- A comparable solar/oil thermal energy development project is feasible, could be island specific, and would cost 16% to 40% less than the proposed geothermal development.
- Conservation is still the cheapest alternative of all, can significantly reduce demand, and provides the greatest return to rate payers.

There are options other than geothermal. Before the State commits the people of Hawaii to future indebtedness and unnecessary electricity rate increases,

more study should be conducted on the economic feasibility and timing of the project, the potential risks and hazards of volcanic disturbances, the degree of environmental damage that could occur, the future demand for electricity, and the potential of supplying electricity from alternative energy sources, conservation and small scale power units. As we stated in the April 1987 study, to move ahead with rapid large scale geothermal development on Hawaii without thoroughly studying these aspects of its development is ill-advised and economically unsound.