

Italy moves to reduce renewable energy handouts

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Wind turbines are pictured in the village of Patirnico, a village between Palermo and Trapani in 2010. The Italian government on Thursday adopted a law designed to progressively reduce the multi-billion euro state subsidies for renewable energy.

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The new rules "aim to strengthen and rationalise the system," and attain "the double objective of increasing [renewable energy](#) production in line with European objectives and reducing the linked subsidies which are ultimately charged to the consumer," the government said in a statement.

[Economic Development](#) Minister Paolo Romani, who wants to end the associated "fraud and speculation" says the current system has cost the

public purse 35 billion euros (\$49 billion) over 10 years.

The level of aid to be paid in future, and who is eligible, will be decided by the end of next month, in order for the new rules to be in force on June 1.

That will give "more certainty and stability to a sector which must not become a speculative bubble," Italy's Environment Minister Stefania Prestigiacomo said.

According to the EU goals, renewable energy should make up 17 percent of Italy's total consumption by 2020.

The latest available figures, from late 2008, showed just 6.8 percent use of renewables, notably [solar power](#).

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