

Video game designer establishes lab for renewable energy

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A Dutch video game designer and entrepreneur has established a laboratory on the Big Island that is focused on developing alternatives to fossil fuels for energy, the Hawaii Tribune-Herald reported.

Henk Rogers established the laboratory to test and develop renewable energy systems that he hopes will make the state's energy use 100% renewable by 2045, ending the state's reliance on fossil fuels that Rogers says is adding acid to the ocean and killing the coral reef, the newspaper reported Sunday.

The laboratory, which is on a ranch, is currently focused on the use of hydrogen to create energy. The laboratory wants to use hydrogen energy cells to store the energy harnessed by the solar panels, to power the community water system, to create jobs and to cook food, the Tribune-Herald reported.

The laboratory is run under the auspices of Rogers' Blue Planet Foundation. One of Rogers' software companies has the intellectual property rights to Tetris, according to the foundation's website.

Blue Planet wants to combine the use of solar energy and hydrogen energy cells. Because solar is an intermittent power source, it's important to be able to store the energy to use during off-peak hours. There's usually 3.8 hours of quality sunshine in the mornings at the ranch, but the sky clouds over as the day progresses.

"We knew storage was important and the key," said Paul Ponthieux, director and chief technology officer of Blue Planet Research. "We have to grab all our energy in the limited window."

The laboratory uses solar energy to pass an electric current through water to create hydrogen gas and oxygen, the newspaper reports. The hydrogen is then stored under pressure in energy cells, similar to a battery.

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