

Island leads world in energy use per square kilometer

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While the United States uses the most energy per capita in the world, Puerto Rico is the top user of energy per square kilometer, according to U.S. Energy Department data released by the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority on Wednesday.

The United States uses more than 13,000 megawatt hours of energy per capita a year, compared to Puerto Rico's use of 6,000 megawatt hours of energy per capita a year.

But the island's energy consumption per square kilometer — over 2,600 megawatt hours a year — surpasses by far that of the United States and other countries. The U.S. consumption per square kilometer is 500 megawatt hours a year, with the state of Hawaii showing the highest such consumption at about 750 megawatt hours a year.

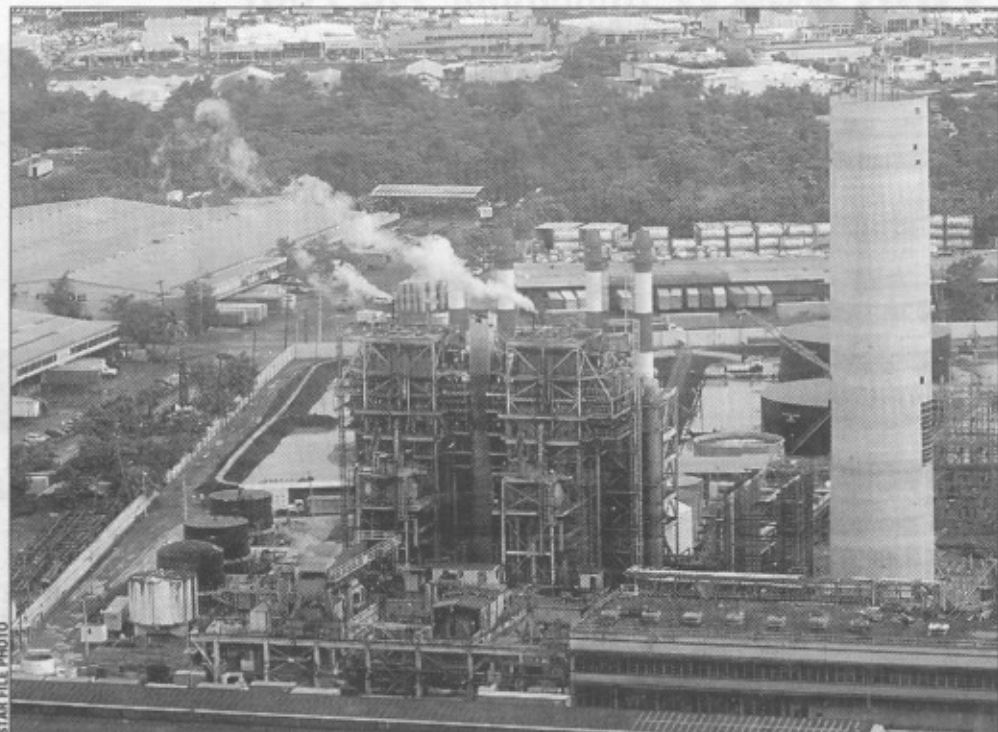
Ireland, a leading economic competitor of the island, uses just over 400 megawatt hours of energy per square kilometer a year. Other Latin American countries such as México,

Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Venezuela and Panamá use between 100 and 200 megawatt hours per square kilometer a year.

In terms of energy use per capita, Singapore's 8,000 megawatt hours of energy a year exceeded that of Puerto Rico and Ireland, which both used about the same 6,000 megawatt hours of energy a year. The Latin American countries with the highest energy use per capita were Venezuela and Chile, which use between 2,500 and 3,000 megawatt hours a year.

PREPA Executive Director Jorge Rodríguez called on consumers and government agencies on Tuesday to save energy, given the spike in oil prices driving up the utility's fuel costs. PREPA customers are heavy consumers of energy when compared to the United States and other countries, said Rodríguez, who did not cite specific sources or go into details at the time.

Rodríguez, who acknowledged that many commonwealth agency offices waste electricity, said that PREPA reached an agreement with La Fortaleza to draw up an executive order requiring commonwealth agencies to adopt



STAR FILE PHOTO

The Puerto Nuevo power plant helps feed the energy needs of Puerto Rico, the top user of energy per square kilometer in the world.

energy-saving measures.

In fact, PREPA's government customers used 255 million kilowatt-hours, or 14 percent of the total 1,795 million kilowatt-hours, said utility spokeswoman Mabel del Valle. The energy use by government agencies is outstanding when considering that 91 percent of PREPA's 1.4 million customers are residential.

Government agencies have racked up some \$280 million in overdue electricity bills.

A megawatt-hour, which is used for measur-

ing larger amounts of electrical energy, represents a million watt-hours. For example, a power plant's daily output is likely to be measured in megawatt-hours.

A watt-hour is a unit of energy most commonly used on household electricity meters in the form of the kilowatt-hour, which is 1,000 watt-hours. One watt-hour is the amount of electricity consumed by a one-watt load — a light bulb, for example — drawing power for one hour.