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## Wind power blowing up in California

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Wind energy now supplies about 5% of California's total electricity needs, or enough to power more than 400,000 ho

That's the word from the California Wind Energy Assn., which said that California put up more new turbines than any installed. Most of that activity occurred in the Tehachapi area of Kern County, with some big projects in Solano, Cont

"The total amount of wind energy installations in 2011 created a banner year for wind generation in California and is reaching its goal of 33% renewable energy," said Nancy Rader, executive director of the California Wind Energy Assn.

Wind capacity in the Golden State has doubled since 2002. With a total of nearly 4,000 megawatts installed, Californ Texas and Iowa.

To keep the wind at their backs, industry proponents are stumping in Congress for an extension of federal production Those credits expire at the end of this year. The industry's pitch: Wind is clean and abundant, reduces U.S. dependen jobs.

But it remains to be seen how enthusiastic lawmakers are about extending the breaks. Pressure is growing in Congres controversy over Solyndra didn't help either. The Fremont, Calif., solar panel maker filed for bankruptcy protection l; half-billion dollars in federal loan guarantees. That has soured some pols on renewables.

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