

Industrial Wind Power: An Energy, Environmental and Economic Fraud

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It's time to take the gloves off and tell the truth about industrial wind power. Too many Vermonters still think wind energy makes sense. It doesn't. The unvarnished truth is that industrial wind power is a fraud---an energy, environmental and economic fraud. Here's why.

Energy Fraud

Industrial wind is a fundamentally flawed energy source for the principal and indisputable reason that wind is variable and therefore unreliable. When there is too little wind, too much wind, or simply no wind at all there is no energy. As industrial economies cannot function without reliable energy, it does not matter how many "windmills" are built in the US; enough reliable generating capacity will have to be maintained and built (as our energy needs grow) to meet peak demands for electricity. Thus, proponents' claims that industrial wind power can replace conventional sources of energy are fraudulent.

Environmental Fraud

Because wind is variable and unreliable and no more than a marginal and supplemental source of energy, it will make no more than a token difference in the fight to halt climate change. Worse still, under "cap and trade" programs, "credits" for sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions that are displaced by wind can be sold to other emitters of these gases resulting in NO reductions in these emissions. Thus, proponents' claims that industrial wind power will make a meaningful environmental difference are fraudulent. What will make a difference is cleaning up the principal sources of greenhouse gases 82% of which are produced by coal for electricity and oil/gas for transportation. The technology is available. What is lacking is political will.

Economic Fraud

The primary motivation for building "wind farms" is tax avoidance, not purported energy or environmental benefits. From a wind developer's perspective, the tax subsidies available from the federal government (e.g. 5 year double declining balance accelerated depreciation and a Production Tax Credit of 1.9 cents per kWh) as well as from many states account, according to some experts, for as much as two-thirds of the economic value of "wind farms". Worse still, with the passage of Renewable Portfolio Standards by a growing number of states, wind developers are being guaranteed a market for what

would otherwise be an uncompetitive and uneconomic source of electricity. Taxpayers are already paying for the subsidies. As utility customers they will also be paying for wind energy in their electric bills. No wonder wind developers are so excited!

Common sense would suggest that taxpayers and utility customers should not be subsidizing an energy source that is variable and unreliable and thus of little value as either a substitute for conventional energy sources or as a contributor to fighting climate change. As common sense appears to be on vacation, add economic fraud to industrial wind energy's impeccable credentials as an energy and environmental fraud.