

Sun Journal

Answer to energy needs isn't blowing in the wind

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Wind energy isn't free. And, it's destructive.

The cost of electricity in Maine will double, because of Gov. Baldacci's climate change policies favoring wind energy.

Despite the claims of wind week propagandists, there is no empirical evidence that wind power will, (1) reduce the cost of electricity in Maine, (2) reduce carbon emissions, (3) make Maine 'energy independent', or (4) be environmentally friendly.

Average residential monthly electric bills could go up by \$50 to \$100 when these policies are fully implemented.

The total cost of wind turbines, and transmission upgrades, will cost \$7 billion, but produce less than 700 megawatts of electricity.

The Baldacci government rejected from the 'energy mix' cheaper clean hydropower available for purchase at 3.5 cents per kilowatt-hour from our Canadian neighbors.

Rejected also was supporting less expensive clean energy from hydro, or nuclear power in the northeast.

Mangers of semiconductor plants in Maine have warned that electricity costs are 120% over budget compared to other locations.

Debt-ridden Spain's experience shows that despite a temporary increase in construction jobs to build alternative energy, 2.2 permanent jobs were destroyed for every construction job created.

Why is our government forcing job-destroying policies on us? To reduce carbon emissions?

Despite stipulations in law that wind power will offset fossil fuel electricity, reducing carbon emissions, no empirical evidence has ever been presented that it does.

Maine has only one oil-fired plant, producing 2.75% of Maine's electricity. It is mostly used during hot calm summer days and frigid calm winter nights, or for emergency capacity.

Newpage in Rumford has the only coal fired electricity plant in Maine, producing to less than 1% of electrons. It is used to help make paper and keep employees working.

About 53% of the electricity generated in Maine comes from renewable sources already, one of the highest in the nation; the remainder, is generated by using clean North American sourced natural gas.

Best-case scenario estimates place the hypothetical reduction of carbon at about 140,000 metric tons, assuming that wind will replace only fossil fuel fired generation.

Using the reasonable assumption that wind will offset electrons from all types produced, cuts that estimate by more than half.

Recognizing that wind generated electrons are erratic, and most are generated at night, reduces that estimate to negligible amounts.

Real world experience proves no emission reductions from wind power.

The erratic nature of wind power requires gas-fired generators to run at lower efficiency levels, causing higher rates of CO2 emission, as experience in Europe has proved. Wind policies have actually increased CO2 emissions there, because of this intractable problem.

Zero emissions reduction, for doubling electric bills?

The probability that heavy wind will coincide with peak need is rare. It is very hard to see how installing thousands of wind turbines on mountains, and hundreds of them offshore, will make Maine 'energy independent' from imported oil.

Maine's primary use for oil is for heating. Less than 5% of US-imported oil comes from Saudi Arabia. We import none from Iran or Iraq. The majority of heating oil used in Maine comes from the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Heating oil represents one of the best values Mainers can buy. At \$2.79 per gallon, heating oil is 60% less expensive than heating by electricity at 15 cents per kwh. The price would have to go to \$6.00 per gallon (\$200 per barrel) to just reach the equivalent cost, and \$400 per barrel to get to 24 cents per wind-driven kwh.

Wind power is destructive to the environment and harmful to people's health.

Over 30,000 acres of Maine's mountain top forests will be permanently clear-cut and destroyed to build industrial parks.

Ironically, by killing the trees on over 30,000 acres, wind parks will lessen the amount of carbon sequestered, and the manufacture and transportation of the turbines will result in no net gain in the reduction of carbon.

The wind turbines in Maine will cause over 45,000 new bird kills per year, using U.S. Fish and

Wildlife estimates.

Recent news-stories have shown health problems from living near turbines in Mars Hill and Vinalhaven.

Another destructive power of Baldacci's policies is the power to corrupt.

The Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting has uncovered, and printed in the Sun Journal, possible double-dealing by former Maine Public Utilities chairman Kurt Adams. According to the story released on May 6th, "Adams said he signed an employment contract with First Wind — and while he was still PUC chairman."

This contract awards the potential for John Baldacci's friend and appointee to make a multi-million dollar windfall profit when the company goes public.

What other connections should we know about?

Do our 'public servants' have our best interests in mind, or theirs?

Perhaps Mainers will begin to reconsider their support for the wind power industry, now that they know what it's costing them.

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