

The Manhattan Mercury  
Published July 19, 2004

We should learn from experience of others and reject wind turbines

To the Editor:

Despite the unpleasant and unnecessarily sarcastic tone of Abigail Conrad's letter regarding industrial wind plants, I completely agree with her desire to free our country from dependence on foreign oil by developing clean renewable energy sources. It makes no sense, however, to try to solve one environmental and economic problem by creating another.

It would take 1,000 of these 450-foot-tall monstrosities to generate one-tenth of 1 percent of our nation's present demand for energy. It would take 4,570 turbines to match the generating capacity of Jeffrey Energy Center. Just one wind turbine requires a foundation containing enough cement to build an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Just imagine what kind of roads would be required to get hundreds of giant cement trucks up to the ridge tops. The roads themselves would be enough to cause irrevocable destruction of the hills' smooth contours and rare tall grasses.

And the destruction would not end once the turbines are built. They kill migrating birds, produce health-damaging noise, wipe out the property values of neighboring land and change formerly serene and peaceful landscapes into restless, tense places, disturbed by constant motion during the day and flashing lights at night. And the sad thing is that, after all the ravages, the electricity produced would not even stay in Kansas. Kansas would not benefit from new jobs. Electricity bills would not go down.

In Great Britain, which has built extensive wind projects in remote locations, people are realizing how much they have given up in return for little or no benefit. They are finding out that wind turbines do not produce truly green energy. The story is the same in Denmark, where 6,000 turbines generate about 13 percent of that country's needs. Electricity in Denmark is among the priciest in Europe, and the number of legal complaints about wind turbines is steadily rising. The government is scaling back plans to build more wind developments. Meanwhile, the Danish landscape has been altered permanently beyond recognition.

We Kansans have the capacity to learn from others' experience. We are lucky that so far, most people in decision-making positions seem to realize how

important it is to proceed with caution and careful study. I believe that once people actually learn the consequences of industrial wind developments, they will tell their elected officials in no uncertain terms to send the wind turbine people packing.

Sandra Clay  
11205 Tulley Hill Road  
(Lower McDowell Creek)  
Geary County