



... ABOUT WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN THE FLINT HILLS.

WIND "FARM" MISCONCEPTIONS

Wind energy development will not impact the land.

Don't be misled. Utility-scale wind energy is industrial development, plain and simple. Remember, these 21st-century wind machines aren't like grandpa's windmill. Fact is, the turbines being proposed in the Flint Hills stand taller than the Statue of Liberty (450 feet and taller)! Industrial-strength wind projects will entail miles of roads and trenched powerlines, and quarrying down 30 feet to make room for about 50 truck loads of concrete to anchor each turbine.

The 'big winner' from wind energy will be Kansas.

On the contrary, the "big winner" will be wind developers. Profits and tax credits, not environment or energy, are the primary motivation for building wind facilities.

Wind energy will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Wind energy has virtually nothing to do with our dependence on foreign oil because very little electricity in the U.S. is produced from oil; less than 1% in Kansas and 3% nationally.

Wind energy will transfer the wealth from oil-rich nations to Kansas.

The transfer of wealth will not be from the oil-rich nations in the Middle East, but rather from Kansas electric customers to the "wind farm" owners who, for the most part, do not live in the state. Kansas customers will pay higher electricity rates and will pick up the tax burden avoided by "wind farm" owners who are now enjoying extremely generous federal and state tax breaks and other subsidies. They are even exempted from ever paying property tax.

Wind energy will give Kansas an economic boost and lots of jobs.

Since tax revenues will not be generated from wind energy, the only economic benefits flowing to Kansas will be rental income for a few landowners, construction jobs, materials and services during the short time it takes to construct a wind farm, and a few maintenance jobs thereafter, about the same number per wind "farm" as a fast food franchise. (Employees skilled in erecting and hooking up windmills will likely be imported.) These economic benefits will be overshadowed by the higher cost of electricity from wind turbines - costs that will be borne by Kansas electric customers.

Wind energy will have minimal ecological impacts.

If siting is not carefully considered, the biological consequences of wind energy development could have very serious ecological implications. For example, 1,000 wind turbines in the Flint Hills could displace greater prairie-chickens from as much as a quarter million acres.

Kansas needs a “renewable portfolio standard” (RES).

While an RES may sound relatively benign, a 10% RPS for Kansas, for example, represents the equivalent of nearly 2,000 Montezuma-sized turbines (or 1,000, 1.5 MW machines), based on year-2000 electricity production data. This level of wind development does not factor in increased energy demand or the need for neighboring states lacking economically viable wind resources to meet their RPS requirement.

We can produce 100% of our electricity from wind.

It is impossible for wind to ever produce 100% of our electricity. Even the most optimistic estimates by proponents of wind energy admit that this form of energy can never provide more than about 20% of our nation's electricity production, because wind is an intermittent energy source; wind does not blow all the time or at a constant speed. Reliable generating units must always be immediately available as a backup to keep electric grids in balance.

We're only talking about a few wind turbines in the Flint Hills.

The current electric grid capacity in the Flint Hills could theoretically accommodate as many as 1,000 Elk River-sized wind turbines (1.5 MW machines). That's about 10 average-sized wind "farms", which would cover many thousands of acres of land. Surprisingly, this level of development would contribute only about 1/10 of 1% of our nation's electricity production, not counting energy loss through transmission. Does it make sense to sacrifice the last stand of the Tallgrass Prairie, the last 3% of one of our most endangered ecosystems, for 1/10 of 1%?

Wind will significantly lower the risk of global warming.

Each kilowatt generated from wind will not alleviate all of the emissions of producing a kilowatt from coal, because coal powered plants like Jeffery Energy Center can not shut down due to the intermittent nature of wind; coal-fired facilities must be kept on line to serve as backup. Also, many of the transmission lines in the Flint Hills are connected to Wolf Creek, a nuclear facility that is not contributing to global warming. If this type of development proceeds in inappropriate places, like the Flint Hills, the environmental benefits derived from wind facilities will be offset by negative impacts.

For more information, visit www.protecttheflinthills.org

Protect the Flint Hills, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, supports the responsible development of alternative energy, but we strongly oppose utility-scale wind development in the Flint Hills. The Flint Hills are not a renewable resource. It's a one-of-a-kind landscape. As an alternative, we support siting turbines on already cultivated lands.



Photo is of a wind "farm" near Palm Springs, Calif. Do we want this in our future? On our ridges and hilltops?