

Is Alternative Energy That Effective?, Part 2



Roger Anghis

The worst part about all this 'alternative energy' is the liberals actually believe that they are better forms of energy than the predominate fossil fuels that we are now using. The problem is there are not as efficient in any way. All the environmentalists declare that the wind is free so it would behoove us to harness that energy. Their hang-up about burning fossil fuels clouds their ability to think, if they even bother to think at all.

Building, transporting and maintaining a wind turbine takes energy and it takes resources. All of this creates a cost. The turbine creates electricity which is sold creating income. Herein lies the problem. For a wind turbine to pay for itself it would have to operate for fifty years just to pay for itself. They only have a life span of about twenty-five years. ***The venture capitalists are enthusiastic about making money, with someone else paying the majority of the freight. I say this because the 400-foot wind turbines that are being constructed today cost \$2 million. A turbine would have to last almost 50 years to pay for itself and then start creating a profit. However, since the investors only pay one-quarter of the cost, they eventually make a profit, again at someone else's expense.***

Speaking of turbine life expectance, the largest wind turbine

farm in this country, 1,600 turbines, was built in the mid-'80s near San Francisco. It did not last 25 years and today sits abandoned. It is not the only wind farm that has been abandoned, it is just the largest.

Also, consider the fact that they only run 30 percent of the time – how short would be their lifetime if they ran anywhere near 100 percent of the time? If you question the 30 percent figure, think of any time you have been down Interstate 39 or in Southern California, near Palm Springs, and wondered why there are so many not running.

And then about the environmentalists, who love the idea of wind turbines. Their first thought is, "Oh, the wind is free." Is it really free if it costs \$2 million per turbine to harvest it?

Then if you quote engineers and scientists saying that the rhythmic thumping of the sound, a pattern found at a distance from the turbines of up to nine-tenths of a mile, but not immediately under or among the turbines, can be sufficient to prevent or interrupt sleep and even cause migraine headaches for some people. Ignoring that fact, environmentalists tend to think only "the wind is free and turbines do not pollute." [1]

That's not the only problem with wind farms. Animals activists complain that these farms are killing birds. I believe that this is a legitimate complaint. The big wind turbines kill hundreds of thousands of birds, bats, eagles, hawks and anything that hits the blades. The Audubon Society estimates that wind turbines kill 140,000 to 328,000 birds each year in North America. During the nighttime, the blades are hardly visible, and if the birds happen to hit the blades, then due to the high RPM of the blades, they hurt their wings, thus falling to their death. Although, many tall buildings and towers can also cause their death, the fact that the blades are a moving part increases the chances of causing death.

Eagles are especially vulnerable as their habit is usually the type selected for wind farms.

For example, scientists have asserted that wind turbines are now the [leading cause of multiple mortality events in bats](#), with [3 to 5 million bats killed by wind turbines every year](#). Migratory bats in North America may face the risk of extinction in the next few decades due to wind turbine-related fatalities.[2]

There are also serious environmental concerns for the manufacturing process. A typical wind turbine contains more than 8,000 different components, many of which are made from steel, cast iron, and concrete. One such component are magnets made from neodymium and dysprosium, rare earth minerals mined almost exclusively in China.

Unfortunately, given [federal regulations](#) in the U.S. that restrict rare earth mineral development and China's poor record of environmental stewardship, the process of extracting these minerals imposes wretched environmental and public health impacts on local communities. It's a story Big Wind doesn't want you to hear.

In a new paper entitled "[Unsustainable Wind Turbine Blade Disposal Practices in the United States](#)", Ramirez-Tejeda et al. (2017) further detail the imminent and unresolved nightmare of wind turbine blade disposal.

Their research indicates that there will be 43 million tonnes of blade waste worldwide by 2050 with China possessing 40% of the waste, Europe 25%, the United States 16% and the rest of the world 19%."

Finding ways to manage the waste from the expected high number of wind turbine blades in need of disposal is crucial to harvest wind energy in a truly sustainable manner.[3]

When you're watching television and you see a commercial about

a new wonder drug and they begin to list the side effects or possible side effects and as you listen you begin to think that it just might be better to live with whatever it is you have because the side effects could kill you. That is what we are seeing with these 'alternative energy' systems. When considering a project, you always have to consider the costs involved to determine if the project will be worth it. Wind turbines only pay, at best, half of their costs, kill birds and create a very dangerous environmental hazard in manufacturing and disposal. Just where is the benefit? We may see a day when wind will become beneficial, but it isn't with the system we have now. Solar is another story and will be discussed in the next installment.

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Foot Notes

1. <https://www.rrstar.com/article/20080709/News/307099886>
2. <https://selfreliancecentral.com>
3. <https://selfreliancecentral.com>
4. Defining America's Exceptionalism, Roger Anghis (Westbow Press, Bloomington, IN) pp. 154-155