

Harnessing the Wind: Our Energy Future

All of the discussions about the negative impacts of our energy use can be downright depressing. As it turns out, though, we have a historic opportunity to create a new energy future that is clean, secure, and profitable by capitalizing on one of our region's unique characteristics:

Abundant wind.

Top 10 States for wind energy potential:

1. North Dakota	6. Nebraska
2. Texas	7. Wyoming
3. Kansas	8. Oklahoma
4. South Dakota	9. Minnesota
5. Montana	10. Iowa



Photo credit: Frank Costanza, Tradewind Energy

Wind energy is an *inexhaustible, affordable, domestic* resource that:

1. Strengthens our region's economy by providing a source of inexpensive electricity, and creating jobs for a new clean energy economy.
2. Helps revitalize our rural communities by providing direct payments to landowners who lease their land for wind development. Also, in some states, wind energy development provides an increased tax base for schools and county programs.
3. Avoids negative impacts on our air and water resources, and does not release greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.
4. Protects the health of our citizens by not releasing harmful chemicals into the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Midwesterners CAN create an energy future that is clean, secure, and profitable, both for ourselves and for future generations.

A clean wind energy future has many benefits for Midwestern families and communities:

1. Strengthens our region's economy.

- The development of wind energy creates jobs. Wind power creates 2.77 jobs for every megawatt (MW) produced.
- Wind energy is *already* cost competitive with fossil fuel electricity—costing between 4 and 6 cents per kilowatt-hour, depending upon the wind resource and project financing of the particular project.
- Most utility CEOs agree that carbon will be regulated soon. Even the CEO of Duke Energy, a coal-burning utility in the Midwest and Southeast and one of the nation's biggest producers of carbon dioxide emissions, is in favor of regulations on carbon dioxide emissions. *Since wind energy doesn't produce carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases, it protects both utilities and ratepayers from rate increases due to these regulations.*

2. Helps revitalize our rural communities.

Wind energy provides direct payments to farmers who lease their land and to counties for schools and citizens. For example:

- Texas saw 1,000 MW of wind projects added to the state in 2001, providing \$11.6 million in property tax payments to local schools, \$2.5 million in landowner royalty income, and 2,500 wind-related jobs.
- The 250 MW Smoky Hills Wind Project in Kansas (in phase I of its construction) has provided over \$16 million to county government and local landowners.

3. Protects our region's natural resources.

- Wind energy requires little to no water to generate electricity. The operation of fossil fuel, nuclear, and hydroelectric power plants however, requires freshwater withdrawals for steam production, cooling, cleaning of equipment, and mining of fuel.
- In Kansas, 21 billion gallons of water are used each year to generate electricity in the state's power plants. *21 billion gallons of water would provide 208,000 Kansans with water for a year.*
- Also, wind power creates no air pollution, no mercury pollution, no greenhouse gases, and requires no mining of fuel.

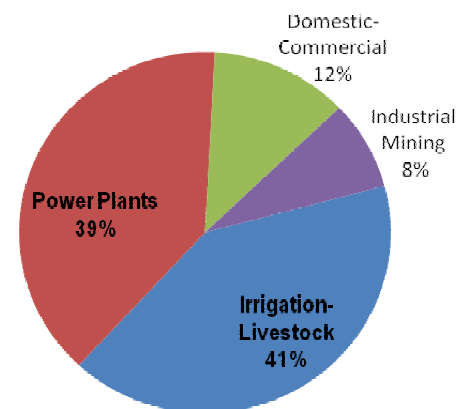


Figure 1: Total U.S. water withdrawals

<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy04osti/33905.pdf>

4. Protects the health of our citizens.

- Wind energy does not produce air pollution. The American Lung Association estimates that power plant particle pollution causes more than 603,000 asthma episodes per year, 366,000 of which could be avoided by cleaning up our power generation.