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# WINDFALL OR WINDBAG?




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In February 2006, Governor Kulongoski called for 25 percent of all Oregon's energy to come from renewable resources by 2025. Since the governor's Action Plan For Energy, the state has courted and installed energy projects in solar, geothermal, wave and wind. In October 2009, Texas-based Horizon Wind Energy filed an application as Antelope Ridge Wind Power Project for a 300-megawatt facility on private grazing lands ten miles southeast of La Grande. A year later, Union County polled voters on whether or not they favored the project. By a slim majority, the depressed rural county voters rejected the wind project in a vote led by Friends of the Grande Ronde Valley and heard across the industry. Portland-based Valerie Franklin of Horizon Wind and Cove-based Dennis Wilkinson, who facilitated the opposition to the project, discuss the pros and cons of wind energy and the Antelope project.

## VALERIE FRANKLIN, HORIZON WIND ENERGY

Clean, renewable wind is an important source of electricity in Oregon's energy portfolio. The most cost-effective of renewable energy sources, wind energy is critical to meeting the challenge of Oregon's hallmark Renewable Energy Standard (25 percent renewable energy by 2025) and in creating energy independence for America.

In addition to being clean and green, wind also brings substantial benefits to the Oregon economy—urban and rural—including jobs, taxes and spending.

One important wind project, the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm, is being proposed by Horizon Wind Energy in Union County on dry, privately owned grazing land near an operating wind project. Antelope is currently undergoing Oregon's rigorous and thorough environmental review process through the State Energy Facility Siting Council, which will require, among other things, Antelope to provide two for one conservation acres for its small footprint.

As a natural and renewable resource, wind varies seasonally. Because of the seasonal variation, geographically diverse wind farms are needed to balance the electrical grid and meet seasonal electrical demand.

That's why Horizon is proposing Antelope. In addition to being responsibly sited on appropriately zoned land, wind farms have to be built where there is diverse and strong wind, and access to large transmission lines.

While there are a good number of wind farms that peak in the spring in the Columbia Gorge, Antelope is unique because the wind blows there when Oregonians use energy the most—in the winter.

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Antelope would also bring in important economic benefits: a second income for ranching and farming families, \$40 million for local government (including \$1 million for local schools), more than \$13 million in local spending, hundreds of construction jobs and more than a dozen long-term. At the end of the day, this is about responsibly sited, clean, renewable, American-made energy in Oregon, together with desperately needed jobs, income for landowners, taxes and spending. Now that's a win-win-wind.

## DENNIS WILKINSON, FRIENDS OF THE GRANDE RONDE VALLEY

Horizon claims the 300-megawatt \$600 million dollar Antelope Ridge project will generate enough power for more than 90,000 homes which is incorrect since wind projects provide power only 10-21 percent of the time per the Department of Energy. That results in power for only 18,900 which equates to \$31,746 per home.

Reduction in CO2 emissions is nothing more than wind power propaganda. As wind power hits the grid, gas and coal plants have to go into spinning reserve and, as a result, they are still producing CO2 but no power. When the wind stops, gas and coal plants have to ramp up. As a result wind power does not reduce CO2 emissions.

Regarding the jobs that have been generated due to wind power, most are temporary. National Wind Watch and Industrial Wind Action have shown long-term jobs are one for every fifteen wind towers, with many of those being specialized positions provided by the wind tower manufacturer.

Statistics from National Wind Watch show that once a wind farm comes to an area, there is actually a loss of jobs, such as tourism jobs. Businesses close due to the high electric rates as a result of the wind farm.

The US Energy Information Administration reported in 2008 that wind power was subsidized at \$23.34 per megawatt hour while natural gas at \$0.25, coal at \$0.44, hydro at \$0.67 and nuclear at \$1.59. Wind power is the biggest recipient of tax dollars and consumes hundreds of thousands of acres of land that is destroyed.

As for real estate devaluation, numerous studies across the country have shown that property values drop as much as 26 percent for property within five miles of a wind tower.

Wind farms rape our environment and take advantage of rural communities by tossing them a few crumbs of tax revenue while being awarded generous tax credits.

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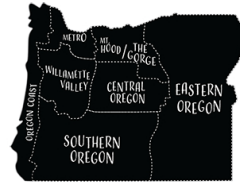
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