

JunkScience.com

All the Junk That's Fit to Debunk

Paul Driessen on wind turbine subsidies—stop them

Posted on [December 2, 2014](#) by [john1282](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

This is a no brainer.

Tell Congress, “End wind energy tax giveaways now”

Lame Duck Congress could vote this week on more tax dollars for Big Wind

Paul Driessen

There is a good chance that the Lame Duck Congress could vote as early as Wednesday, December 4, on extending huge taxpayer subsidies for Big Wind energy companies for another three, five or more years.

Citizens concerned about high-cost electricity, skyrocketing government debt, and massive giveaways of hard-earned tax dollars to crony corporations should call or email their senators and their congressman – and explain why these subsidies should end now.

The wind energy “production tax credit” is a bad idea that should have been terminated years ago. That the PTC is still around, decades after this “temporary” subsidy was enacted decades ago, is absurd. That it could be extended by legislators who were just thrown out of office is intolerable.

Even a six-month wind PTC extension is too much. But a three-year or five-year extension – retroactive for this past year and followed by a multi-year “phase-out” – is insanity personified.

You think it can't happen? Think again.

The American Wind Energy Association just sent a letter to Congress, insisting that the PTC be extended in the name of “clean energy,” jobs and the environment – and signed by 450 rent-seeking companies and environmental pressure groups that live off our taxpayer and consumer dollars.

Make your voices heard. Here are some important points that you can make.

Because its electricity is so expensive, wind energy kills two to four jobs for every job it creates. Wind turbines kill millions of birds and bats every year – while the industry, environmentalists and politicians ignore the slaughter, bury the evidence and let scavengers take the carcasses away without counting them.

From Tim Philips, president of Americans for Prosperity, in the December 2 Wall Street Journal:

The PTC gives wind energy producers 2.3-cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity produced for ten years. But it expired in 2013. So now wind energy lobbyists are asking Congress to renew the subsidy.

Over the past seven years, the PTC has cost taxpayers \$7.3 billion. It is expected to pay out \$2.4 billion more in 2015 alone. Combined with other subsidies and programs, it gave wind energy companies \$56.29 in government subsidies per megawatt-hour in 2010, according to an Institute for Energy Research report. Compare that to 64 cents per MWH subsidies for natural gas and \$3.14 for nuclear power.

Instead of paying wind producers based on how much of their electricity is used, the PTC pays them based on how much electricity they generate – even if no one needs the electricity when it is generated, and even if they aren’t producing any electricity at all when it is needed the most.

Former Oklahoma Republican congressman Ernest Istook, in the November 20 Washington Times:

Every gambler must know his limits – when to stop making bets and walk away from the table. Uncle Sam needs to quit making bets on wind energy and save us all about \$10 billion a year. Let the industry rise, fall or spin its rotors based on its own merits, without the crony capitalism government giveaways.

Ending the wind PTC will save money for consumers. We pay three times, because wind energy raises electricity rates, on top of what we pay in federal subsidies and in state subsidies.

Wind energy handouts have been a 22-year gamble. The tax credits are always labeled “temporary,” but they have been renewed by Congress eight times so far. Each short-term extension just gives supporters the incentive to push for another one.

Wind advocates are addicted to subsidies, just like addicted gamblers, craving one more lottery ticket, one more deal of the cards, one more throw of the dice, one more spin of the wheel. None will produce a sudden bonanza, because the root of the problem doesn't change: Wind is free but the machinery to harvest it is expensive, raising costs far above other, more affordable ways to generate electricity.

The only windfall is for the wind farms. They are the only guaranteed winners, just as “the house” always wins in a casino or a lottery.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wind power. What is inherently wrong is compelling people to use the highest-cost energy. It would be equally wrong to force you to order the highest-priced meal at a restaurant, purchase the most expensive shoes, or buy gasoline at whatever outlet charges the most.

U.S. Energy Information Administration data show that electricity prices in wind-using states are skyrocketing at four times the national average. Nine of the eleven largest wind-power states are suffering – witness the 33% increase in electricity rates in Wyoming and the 26% increase in South Dakota.

In other places, rate increases are briefly delayed or hidden by state subsidies. Oklahoma's 1,700 windmills haven't yet increased consumer prices, but only because the state government is absorbing the difference through giveaways to wind companies. To date, Oklahoma taxpayers have paid over \$700,000 per windmill in subsidies.

Fortunately, the federal wind subsidies expired at the end of 2013. Unfortunately, a huge push is underway to revive them during the lame-duck Congress, while their sponsoring liberal Democrats still control the Senate. They want to force House Republicans to revive \$18 billion worth of production tax credits of \$23 per MWH, using backroom deals to sneak the provisions into other legislation.

Wind's business model is warped, because it's based on government, not on free enterprise. The industry confesses that because there was no subsidy, no new wind farms were announced in 2014. Zero. Zilch. Nada. That's the biggest proof that theirs is a Solyndra-style system that depends on crony capitalism.

Today's biggest wind energy investor, who would gain most from reviving the tax credit, is Warren Buffett. As Mr. Omaha's billionaire friend said recently, "We get a tax credit if we build a lot of wind farms. That's the only reason to build them. They don't make sense without the tax credit."

Other energy providers have better business models. Oil and gas companies don't get subsidies. Instead, they get tax treatment common to other businesses, but which activists deliberately mislabel as subsidies. Getting money from taxpayers is a subsidy; getting to keep part of your own money is not.

But even if you accepted the mislabeling, government help for fossil fuels is peanuts compared to wind power. The Institute for Energy Research, using government calculations, reports that for each BTU of power produced, renewable energy gets 49 times more in federal incentives than do fossil fuels.

And oil and gas companies pay \$30 billion a year into the federal treasury, while green energy drains over \$10 billion a year from the federal treasury – and from your taxpayer pockets.

To justify its billions in crony capitalism, the wind industry uses claims worthy of MIT Professor Jonathan Gruber, the infamous source of false information about Obamacare. Mr. Gruber believes Americans are stupid. Do wind advocates think Americans are suckers?

Should we not notice that Big Wind already had 22 years of "temporary" tax credits? It used our money to place their bets. It's time Big Wind is told to gamble with its own money.

Paul Driessen is senior policy analyst for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (www.CFACT.org), author of *Eco-Imperialism: Green power – Black death* and coauthor of *Cracking Big Green: To save the world from the save-the-earth money machine*.