

## True or False: Is Wind Power Slowly Blowing Fossil Fuel Away?

Coal, oil, wood – throughout the history of the United States all of these products have served as reliable sources of energy for Americans. In recent years, not only as a nation, but worldwide people are starting to wean themselves from these sources and have started looking towards more environmentally friendly energy production. One of the emerging renewable sources that has been gaining a lot of notoriety in recent years is wind power. “[W]ind currently produces just over 1% of world-wide electricity use, it accounts for approximately 20% of electricity production in Denmark, 9% in Spain, and 7% in Germany.”<sup>1</sup>

According to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), an organization dedicated to promoting wind power, in 2007 the United States expanded its wind power generation by 45%. That increase is equivalent to the energy use of 1.5 million American households.<sup>2</sup> Unlike in Europe, wind energy doesn’t account for a large amount of renewable energy sources in the United States. One theory according to Bret Schulte of U.S. News & World Report is that, “...America’s wind-swept plains are far from many cities, requiring massive infrastructure to move the power.”<sup>3</sup> Another is the federal government’s failure to consistently give tax credits for those who generate and use wind power.

Whatever the reason, wind energy is one source of renewable energy that has a number of benefits without draining the earth’s natural resources. AWEA is currently promoting the following benefits in their push to increase the use of wind power as your renewable energy source of choice:

- It helps protect consumers from increases in electricity costs due to volatile fuel prices and supply disruptions.
- Reduces global warming emissions.
- Conserves precious water resources: Wind farms don’t need water for steam or cooling, a benefit that is of increasing value in arid areas and in times of drought.<sup>4</sup>

With these benefits in mind and the price of oil steady on the rise, it will only be a matter of time before wind farms are a common part of the American skyline. Will wind power blow away its competition? Only time and technology will tell! STAY TUNED!

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind\\_power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_power)

<sup>2</sup> American Wind Energy Association, [http://www.awea.org/newsroom/releases/AWEA\\_Market\\_Release\\_Q4\\_011708.html](http://www.awea.org/newsroom/releases/AWEA_Market_Release_Q4_011708.html).

<sup>3</sup> Schulte, Bret, *U.S. News & World Report*, “Energy Efficiency from the Wind, March 26/April 2, 2007, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> See Note 2.