

If you can't see grid scale wind turbines from your home and don't think they affect you, it may be time to reconsider.

Maine is being permanently scarred and its "Quality of Place" jeopardized by industrial wind projects. Wind industry advertising and PR tells us that wind power is high benefit and low impact. But the very opposite is true. Calling them "wind farms," wind developers promote a warm, soft image. But reality paints a different picture. The turbines being used are more than twice as high as the tallest building in Portland, and getting larger with each new project. They are planted on the highest points of land, compromising Maine's irreplaceable natural viewsheds. Flashing lights are polluting our rare night skies. The highly disturbing turbine sound is affecting nearby residents' health and replacing tranquility with industrial racket. A negative impact on tourism—Maine's largest industry—is inevitable. Who wants to hike, fish, hunt, swim, canoe, kayak, cross-country ski... or enjoy any outdoor recreation in the shadows of industrial energy facilities that grotesquely dominate the countryside?

Still don't think they affect you? Look at this month's electric bill.

In July Central Maine Power (CMP) transmission rates jumped a whopping 19.6% due to "recent and ongoing transmission reliability upgrades," according to the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC). According to the Governor's Energy Office, transmission rates are expected to double in the next few years. CMP's 19.6% increase is the beginning of massive increases for Maine ratepayers if we don't say "NO" to more wind power. While wholesale market rates for electricity remain below four cents per kilowattHour, a wind power developer is now seeking Maine PUC approval for a 29 cent to 32 cent electricity rate (before transmission and distribution charges).

Fallacies the wind power developers want you to believe:

FALLACY: Wind is free so it will reduce our electric bills.

FACT: Wind itself is free but converting wind to electricity and delivering it to us is exorbitantly expensive.

FALLACY: Wind power will help us get off foreign oil.

FACT: Oil is responsible for less than 1% of US electricity. In 2011, not even one half of 1% of Maine's electricity generation came from oil.

FALLACY: Maine needs more electricity generation.

FACT: In Maine, our generation capacity is about three times our typical usage. The grid operator predicts less than 1% annual increase in demand over the next decade.

FALLACY: Erecting wind turbines on Maine's ridgelines will improve our air quality and combat CO₂ emissions.

FACT: There is no scientific evidence that grid scale wind power can replace or even displace base load generators. 300+ miles of Maine turbines might have about the same potential carbon reducing effect as a mere 1% of Maine's forest, which naturally sequesters carbon.

FALLACY: I don't need to care because I have no financial investment in wind power.

FACT: If you pay Federal income taxes then you are an unwitting investor in wind power. Wind power is heavily subsidized by American taxpayers. In 2010 the \$5 billion in Federal wind power subsidies was more than triple the subsidy to natural gas and coal electricity combined, despite the fact that coal and natural gas generated 30 times more electricity than wind.

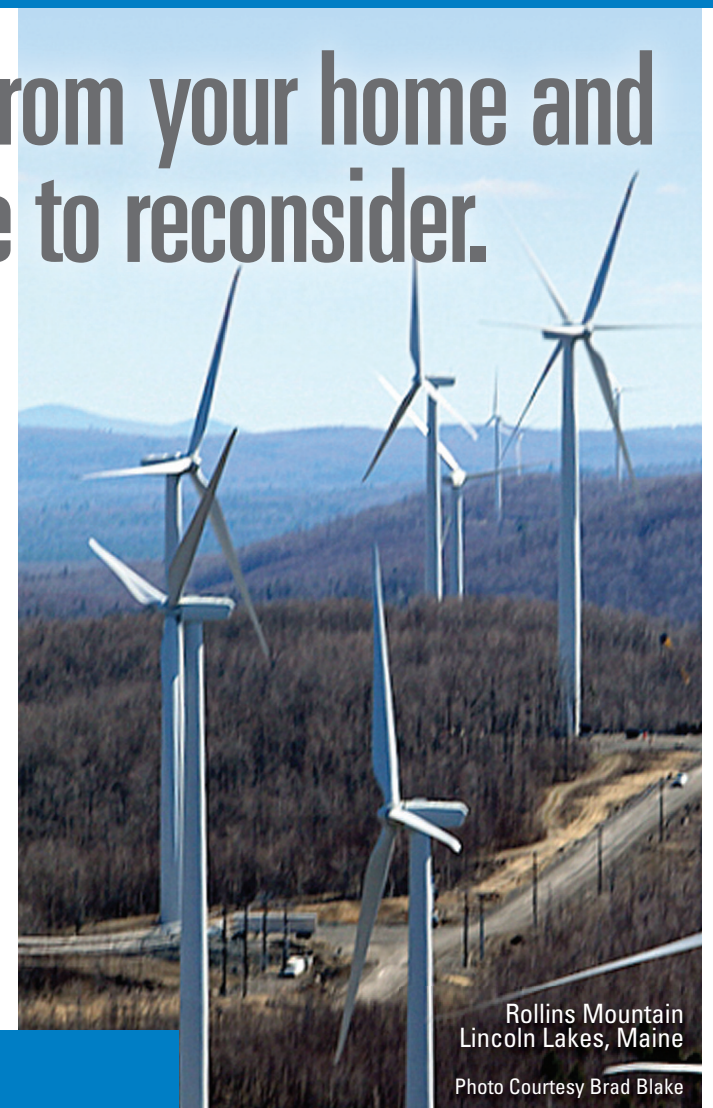
FALLACY: Wind power will create lots of new jobs in Maine.

The developer says that they're going to spend \$150 million dollars in my area for this project.

FACT: Wind projects create almost exclusively short term (typically less than 6 months) construction jobs. Construction jobs are always welcome, but publicly funded construction jobs should build useful and necessary projects such as roads and bridges, not boutique power facilities that make a few individuals wealthy. Because they're monitored remotely, wind projects typically create only 2-5 permanent local jobs per project. Moreover, state mandates for purchase of high priced wind energy will ultimately lead to significant job losses as manufacturers move their facilities to states with lower energy costs. Regarding spending claims, pay attention to their words. They want you to believe it's all being spent locally. The fact is 75% of the money in these projects is spent on the actual turbine units, most of which are manufactured in Asia and Europe. Relatively little is truly spent locally, with much of it going to out of town or out of state laborers who take their paychecks home with them every weekend.

FALLACY: The project in my area will power 12,000 homes.

FACT: Pay close attention to the words used by the developer. They typically say that the project "generates enough energy to power X number of homes." Powering that many homes would require that the wind blows at the ideal operating speed 24/7/365. In reality, projects generally produce about 25% of "nameplate" capacity, and they always need existing generators to stay ready, usually burning fuel even while not producing electricity.



Rollins Mountain
Lincoln Lakes, Maine

Photo Courtesy Brad Blake

FALLACY: Maine has a responsibility to do our part and use more renewable resources for our energy.

FACT: According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Maine is ranked #1 in renewable non-hydro electricity generation per capita, per gross state product, and as a percentage of its total electrical generation. We have the highest renewable energy portfolio standard in the country.

FALLACY: Surely a few turbines placed here and there won't harm the beauty of our state.

FACT: Maine's flawed "Wind Energy Act" (a law enacted as emergency legislation in 2008 and never debated in the legislature) mandates a 2,700 megawatt goal. It will require up to 1,700 turbines over 300 miles of Maine ridgelines. That's the equivalent of a row of 40 to 50-story skyscrapers strung from Portland to Fort Kent, spaced approximately 1/5 of a mile apart. All of these turbines could be replaced by one moderately sized natural gas fired 10 acre facility - at 80% less cost.

FALLACY: Maine is the "Saudi Arabia of Wind".

FACT: This line has been used in at least 14 other states. Moreover, based on the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's wind potential data, Maine's onshore wind resource rating per square mile is 89% below the national average. Perhaps the Saudi Arabia analogy was meant to mean concentration of any "windfalls" in the hands of a small few.

**Ready to learn the facts about wind power?
www.friendsofmainesmountains.org
and www.windtaskforce.org**