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THE HOT BLOG

Thursday, June 26, 2008

Big Shoes to Fill [Drew Thornley]

As a follow-up on my "[Everything's Bigger in Texas](#)" post, here is a [petition](#) from Environment Texas, the group calling for 30-mile-by-30-mile solar plants in west Texas that they say will power the entire state. Here is the text of the email linking to the petition:

Hi,

Texas is the national leader in wind power and we have the potential to meet the rest of our energy needs with solar power. In fact, if we put solar panels on an area thirty miles by thirty miles in west Texas, we could generate enough electricity to power the entire state at prices competitive with new nuclear plants!

But to bring all that clean wind and solar power from west Texas, we need to invest in our transmission grid. Right now, the Public Utilities Commission is deciding how much renewable energy transmission to build.

The most ambitious plan they're looking at would create transmission capacity for almost an additional 18,000 megawatts of wind and solar power, which would reduce smog pollution from power plants by 13% and global warming pollution by 16%.

As the PUC prepares to make its decision, I invite you to sign this petition urging the Commissioners to select a plan that maximizes the renewable energy transmission grid.

Sincerely,

Luke Metzger
Environment Texas Director
LukeM@environmenttexas.org
<http://www.environmenttexas.org>

P.S. Thanks again for your support. Please feel free to share this e-mail with your family and friends.

For those not familiar with just how big Texas is — and how big its growing energy needs are: according to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas: (1) [Texas' energy demand](#) is expected to grow 1.8 percent per year for the next decade; (2) Texas' population of 24.3 million is expected to grow to 29.7 million by 2020 and 40.1 million by 2040. As of January 2008, the year-to-date contributions of [coal](#), [natural gas](#), and [nuclear power](#) to our nation's total energy generation were 50.3 percent, 19.8 percent, and 19.5 percent, respectively. And wind and solar are supposed to bear that whole load?

According to the [Energy Information Administration](#), for YTD through January 2008, wind energy provided just 1 percent of our nation's energy needs (The figure for YTD through January 2007 was just under 0.7 percent.). And solar, well, you can do the math: Out of the 363,268 units of energy generated in 2007 (measured in 1,000 mWh), solar thermal and photovoltaic energy did their part by producing 15 units. Yep, wind and solar are well on their way to meeting all of our needs.

[06/26 08:45 AM](#)



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