



## INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY\*

November 10, 2008

### Gone With The Wind

**Environment:** From California to Missouri, four of five environmental initiatives lost at the ballot box. Voters are clearly still not ready for exorbitant costs and excessive regulation without clear benefits.

Read More: **Energy**

[Podcast IBD Editorials](#)

President-elect Obama may have felt "a righteous wind" at his back during the campaign, but it did not translate into environmental victories at the ballot box, where one green initiative after another failed for a variety of reasons.

California voters shot down both clean-energy propositions on the ballot. Proposition 7 would have required utilities to generate 40% of their power from renewable energy by 2020 and 50% by 2025. It lost 65% to 35%.

Proposition 10 would have created \$5 billion in general obligation bonds to help consumers and others purchase certain high-fuel-economy or alternative-fuel vehicles, and to fund research into alternative fuel technology. It failed 60% to 40%.

Even in San Francisco, the capital of liberalism and greenie fervor, voters rejected Proposition H, which would have mandated a rapid increase in the city's use of clean energy to achieve its goal of being 100% renewable by 2040. It would also have meant taking over the city's private electric company.

Obama took the former red state of Colorado, which also elected environmentalist Senate candidate Mark Udall over oil executive Bob Shaffer. Yet Coloradans struck down a measure to pay for conservation and clean energy by increasing taxes on oil companies.

Only in Missouri did green energy score a victory. There, Proposition C mandated a 15% increase in renewable energy by 2021 with slow and steady yearly increases that energy companies felt they could phase in without disruption and with which voters felt more comfortable.

The mantra is that oil and car companies are blocking the increased use of renewable energy. The truth is that consumers, through their choices and their votes, are slowing the stampede. They worry about the cost in tough economic times and whether such efforts are worth it based on dubious evidence of global warming. Energy independence is one thing, but going bankrupt to achieve it is quite another.

When gasoline prices were over \$4 a gallon, the chant "drill baby drill" grew loud enough that Democrats were forced to back off renewing a ban on offshore drilling. Now in complete control, they can block offshore drilling, nuclear power and shale oil in their Ahab-like pursuit of alternative energy.

Texas consumers are finding out how expensive the pursuit of alternative energy can be. Their state generates more electricity from wind than any other, and people like oil legend T. Boone Pickens want to generate more.

A just published study by the Texas Public Policy Foundation, "Texas Wind Energy: Past, Present and Future," says that to achieve even modest amounts of wind energy would cost rate payers and taxpayers at least \$60 billion through 2025. That includes transmission costs, production costs, subsidies, tax breaks, economic disruption costs and grid-management costs.

Because of the intermittent nature of wind, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas uses a figure of only 8.7% of wind power's installed capacity when determining available power during peak periods.

On cloudy and windless days, solar and wind are useless and require conventional power sources as backup. Output is not steady and cannot be increased on demand. You can't make the sun shine brighter or the wind blow harder during peak periods.

A Feb. 27 Reuters story illustrated the point. Headlined "Loss Of Wind Causes Texas Power Grid Emergency," it told of an electric grid operator forced to curtail 1,100 megawatts of power to customers on just 10 minutes' notice. The wind simply stopped blowing.

Wind turbines generally operate at only 20% efficiency compared with 85% for coal, gas and nuclear plants. A single 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plant would generate more dependable power than 2,800 1.5-megawatt, occasionally operating wind turbines sitting on 175,000 acres.

Nuclear power is clean energy, and you wouldn't have to wait for a sunny or windy day to plug in your electric car.



© Copyright 2008 Investor's Business Daily. Permission granted for up to 10 copies. All rights reserved.

You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing [http://license.icopyright.net/3.7543?icx\\_id=310954769943823](http://license.icopyright.net/3.7543?icx_id=310954769943823) into any web browser. Investor's Business Daily Inc. and Investor's Business Daily logos are registered trademarks of Investor's Business Daily Inc.. The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.