

## Wind power is too fickle to be relied upon by Ohioans

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The Feb. 11 *Dispatch* article "Winds of change" was misleading. It failed to disclose the three problems with wind energy: It is intermittent, volatile and unreliable. It is also misleading to talk about the number of homes served when describing wind-energy capability. In the first place, homes use only 37 percent of all energy in the United States.

Wind advocates use a figure pulled out of a hat (in this case 4,000 kilowatt-hours per home per year) for the homes-served number. My small home, which is all-electric, uses 20,000 kwh per year. Homes using wind energy must always have some reliable source for backup. The wind must be blowing at the right speed to produce electricity and does not do so reliably when most of the energy is needed. Electricity produced varies with the wind speed.

The cost of wind energy also is misreported. Energy is charged as it leaves the wind farm in Indiana. By the time it travels the 400 miles to Ohio, it loses about 10 percent. The cost of the federal and state subsidies paid to wind-energy companies is never factored in, nor is the substantial cost of the thermal generators that must be built to back up the unreliable wind.

Wind farms should not be built where the wind doesn't blow (Ohio ranks 36th in potential capacity, according to the article), so the economic benefit disappears immediately, especially when one considers that electric rates for consumers will possibly double or triple. There is also very little environmental improvement, because of the backup requirements. Texas is the leading state for wind energy, with about 20 percent capacity. The following is a quote from the executive summary of a report called "Texas Wind Energy: Past, Present, and Future" of October 2008 by the Texas Public Policy Foundation:

"The greatest impediment to wind's large-scale contribution to our energy supply is its intermittent nature. The wind must blow in order for wind turbines to produce power. In Texas, however, wind blows the least during the summer months when we need power the most. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas relies on just 8.7 percent of wind power's installed capacity when determining available power during peak summer hours."

We in Ohio have very low electric rates. Mine here in Columbus is \$.085 per kwh. Those rates will skyrocket when we have to use any alternate source for our electricity. Gov. Ted Strickland and the legislature should reconsider the law that requires investor-owned power companies to get 12.5 percent of their capacity from renewable sources by 2024.

*JOHN McFADDEN*  
*Groveport*

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