

In a message dated 3/13/04 4:49:43 PM Eastern Standard Time, cbedit@kingcon.com writes:

Greetings,

Has anyone seen a critical review of the 2003 analytical report entitled "The Effect of Wind Development on Local Property Values" prepared by Renewable Energy Policy Project? Thanks,

Cynthia Barber
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Cynthia:

I believe others on the "cc: list for this email have reviewed the REPP property values report and may know of some critiques. I have read the report and hoped to find time to prepare a "publishable" critique but that time hasn't materialized.

I would offer the following brief comments, first on the "atmosphere" that allows reports like this to get prepared and published and then on the "substance" of the report.

THE ATMOSPHERE:

- a. The REPP report is virtually worthless but, unfortunately, the REPP folks have made it widely available and wind advocates have trumpeted it widely so it has received far more attention than it deserves.
- b. You should be aware that REPP (www.repp.gov <<http://www.repp.gov>>) is an unabashed "renewable energy" advocacy group that receives money from various liberal foundations and, unfortunately again, too many of our tax dollars via the US EPA, US Dept. of Energy, and the DOE National "Laboratories," including NREL.
- c. I seem to recall that this REPP report was financed by one of the federal agencies, probably DOE or possibly the National Renewable Energy "Laboratory."
- d. The approach taken by those financing the report is all too common:
 - 1) Find an organization that is hugely sympathetic to some point you wish to make.
 - 2) Allow (or encourage) that organization to start with the conclusion you wish to support.
 - 3) Allow (or encourage) that organization to collect data and information that will support the desired conclusion -- while ignoring countervailing data and views.
 - 4) Allow (or encourage) the organization to make whatever assumptions are necessary to assure that the desired conclusion is reached.
 - 5) Have the organization include a "disclaimer" that the report doesn't necessarily reflect the views of the organization providing the financing.
 - 6) Allow (or encourage) the organization to put out a press release or other promotional material to trumpet the conclusions.
- e. The organization doing the "analysis" and preparing the report then arranges for others to review and comment on the draft. In this case the reviewers included:
 1. James Barrett - Couldn't locate his affiliation.
 2. Jack Cadogan - US DOE wind energy program (possible the source of funds?)
 3. Jim Caldwell - American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)

4. Tom Gray - AWEA
5. Tom Priestly - couldn't locate his affiliation.
6. Randy Swisher - AWEA
7. Ryan Wiser - a high profile "renewables" advocate from DOE's Lawrence Berkeley National "Laboratory" (LBNL)

This is a good example of the kind of "peer review" that DOE typically allows. As you can see there is NO hope of an objectivity.

f. There is a ready market for this kind of "analysis" and accompanying press releases. There are dozens of general press and trade press reporters (print and electronic) who are willing to take the press releases and turn it into a "story" with absolutely no critical review of the underlying material. It seems that many of today's media reporters and "analysts" have little discernment capability. (Another manifestation of the "garbage in garbage out" cliché.) This indiscriminate reporter/analyst problem is compounded by the fact that many "trade" publications -- particularly those centered in the Washington, DC area -- are dependent on government agencies as subscribers (using our tax dollars). The last thing these reporter/analysts want to do is offend the source of their bread and butter by publishing anything counter to the government agency's or DOE "laboratory's" interests.

SUBSTANCE OF REPORT

As you have probably detected already, the basic methodology is fundamentally flawed in that it:

- a. Seeks to focus on properties within a 5 mile radius of a wind farm.
- b. Relies heavily on data collected from Assessors. I won't comment further on this flaw since most anyone who owns property recognizes assessors are probably the LAST place one would go for reliable data on MARKET values of property.
- c. There is one VALID and RELIABLE source of market values of property: The selling price. If the property is not sold, no one knows the market value.

Returning to the 5-mile radius issue:

As has become quite clear as "wind farms" have proliferated, the potential adverse impacts on property values come from a variety of concerns:

- a. Visual - scenic. First, if the windmills can't be seen (e.g., because of hilly terrain), there may be little adverse visual-scenic impact on the value of a piece of property -- whether that property is within the 5 mile radius. If the windmills, can be seen from a long distance, the 5-mile radius is meaningless. (Parenthetically, it's interesting that some who claim to be environmental advocates object to "haze" that impairs visibility and scenery but have no qualms about the visual impairment resulting from dozens of windmills.
- b. Flicker or strobe effect. This affects those people who are in a line behind the sun and the windmill (principally near sunrise and sunset). Distance is not necessarily relevant.
- c. Noise. Distance may be important but 5-miles is not a meaningful measure.
- d. Ecological impact. Do those who are concerned about the impact of "wind farms" proposed for the Flint Hills and Tallgrass Prairie in Kansas think that 5 miles is a useful measure of

property value impact?

e. Health & Safety. Five miles isn't relevant to concerns about blade and ice throws.

f. We should forget the impact of transmission lines, substations, land clearing, roads and other ancillary impacts of a "wind farm."

In summary, the analytical methodology of the REPP report is so flawed, the organization and the "reviewers" so biased, and the government sponsor's motives (and commitment to wise use of tax dollars) so suspect, that the report doesn't deserve attention.

Unfortunately, the well subsidized and financed wind industry -- and their army of supporters (many financed with tax dollars) -- will continue to cite the report as if it were valid.

Government financing of such reports provide a sad commentary on quality and objectivity of the government "officials" involved. They have long since forgotten their obligations to public good and use their positions to advance their personal philosophies and various narrow special interests.

Sorry I don't have time to deal with the report in more detail. However, I should also note that some more objective property value reports probably have been done -- particularly in Europe. Perhaps some of the 'CC' addressees can point you to some of them.

Glenn Schleede