

"All in" for Wind

Written by Elisha Smith
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By Paul Mansoor, paulm@cfra.org , Center for Rural Affairs

People want wind energy, but don't want to pay a lot more for it. According to a new [study](#) , they may be able to have their cake--and eat it too.

Wind energy is attractive for economic reasons. A robust wind industry could bring hundreds of thousands of jobs and tens of billions of dollars per year into the economy, much of it in rural America. But fear of higher prices has kept wind development grounded.

Although wind produces some of the cleanest energy, nobody wants higher electric rates. Wind towers are expensive. And in remote areas, developing new wind farms can require transmission improvements, which are necessary to send the electricity from producers to consumers. Power companies usually pass these costs onto ratepayers. This creates a bottleneck, stalling wind projects and keeping clean energy from getting off the ground.

However, introducing greater levels of wind together with smart system planning can decrease the annual market price relative to today. This means consumers would pay less for wind energy!

The key is to go "all in." The savings accrue when healthy wind development is combined with transmission upgrades. Installing just a few turbines at a time will cost more, on average, than multiple developments.

The case for wind energy keeps getting stronger. Job creation, clean energy and lower electric bills?

Change is coming... you can feel it in the breeze.

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