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The goal of the [Energy Policy Center](#) is to promote a free market in energy production, where no protections, subsidies, or regulations result in energy winners and losers. We advocate that government remain neutral and level the playing field. That way consumers can reap the benefits of a healthy energy market - competition, lower prices, and more options.

<http://energy.i2i.org/> includes: (not all the articles are copied into this email

*“Giving society cheap, abundant energy would be the equivalent of giving an idiot child a machine gun,”* wrote environmental doomsday prophet Dr. Paul Ehrlich in 1975.

Predictions from the first Earth Day in 1969, [“Environmentalists’ Wild Predictions,”](#) by Walter Williams: At the first Earth Day celebration, in 1969, environmentalist Nigel Calder warned, *“The threat of a new ice age must now stand alongside nuclear war as a likely source of wholesale death and misery for mankind.”* C.C. Wallen of the World Meteorological Organization said, *“The cooling since 1940 has been large enough and consistent enough that it will not soon be reversed.”* In 1968, Professor Paul Ehrlich, Vice President Gore’s hero and mentor, predicted there would be a major food shortage in the U.S. and *“in the 1970s ... hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death.”* Ehrlich forecasted that 65 million Americans would die of starvation between 1980 and 1989, and by 1999 the U.S. population would have declined to 22.6 million. Ehrlich’s predictions about England were gloomier: *“If I were a gambler, I would take even money that England will not exist in the year 2000.”*

Meet a self-described “co-founder” of Earth Day, murder Ira Einhorn, a.k.a. the Unicorn. Reason’s Nick Gillespie offers a glimpse into: a dark corner of the 1960s’ and ’70s’ countercultural carnival, one involving Philadelphia’s highest-profile hippie guru: Ira Einhorn, also known as *“the Unicorn,”* a preacher of love and flower power who was **convicted of killing his girlfriend in 1977 and stuffing her remains in a trunk that he kept in his apartment.**

While Gillespie acknowledges that some claim “The Unicorn” had no formal connection with Earth Day, still he articulates the lunacy of radical eco-chic.

However spurious his Earth Day connection, his case is a must-read for anyone interested in the excesses of and bizarreness of the broadly construed hippie movement and the sorts of radical-chic enablers who help obvious sociopaths and psychopaths avoid the law.

# Senate Committee Report on Billionaires and Eco-Left Activism in Colorado Draws on II Research

August 12, 2014 by [michael](#)

Filed under: [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [preferred energy](#)

*A key section of the July report issued by the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee focusing on Colorado environmental activists draws from work that first appeared at the Independence Institute's Complete Colorado blog.*

In a wide ranging, heavily footnoted report released July 30, the Minority Staff of the United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works demonstrates the confluence of the Environmental Protection Agency, eco-left activists, and what it calls the “Billionaire’s Club” in a complicated, tax-evading, [multi-million dollar philanthropy scheme of dark money](#):

“Through these arrangements, the Billionaire’s Club gains access to a close knit network of likeminded funders, environmental activists, and government bureaucrats who specialize in manufacturing phony “grassroots” movements and in promoting bogus propaganda disguised as science and news to spread an anti-fossil energy message to the unknowing public. Not only is the system incredibly sophisticated, but the Club’s attorneys and accountants have mastered the loopholes and gray areas in the tax code, which enable them to obtain a full tax benefit, even when the recipient of the grant is not recognized as a public charity, and even if the money indirectly and impermissibly funds political activities.”

The report finds fault with the billionaires’ “scheme to keep their efforts hidden and far removed from the political stage,” which they characterized as “deliberate, meticulous, and intended to mislead the public.”

“While it is uncertain why they operate in the shadows and what they are hiding, what is clear is that these individuals and foundations go to tremendous lengths to avoid public association with the far-left environmental movement they so generously fund,” the report authors wrote.

Highlighting the byzantine tax procedures used to cloak the various foundations and individual donors, the report used case studies of efforts targeted in several different states, including Colorado.

In the section on activism targeting hydraulic fracturing, the report singled out New York anti-fracking efforts that later manifested in Colorado:

The same billionaire foundations behind the New York anti-fracking efforts have also moved into Colorado through two coalitions – Local Control Colorado and Frack Free Colorado, which

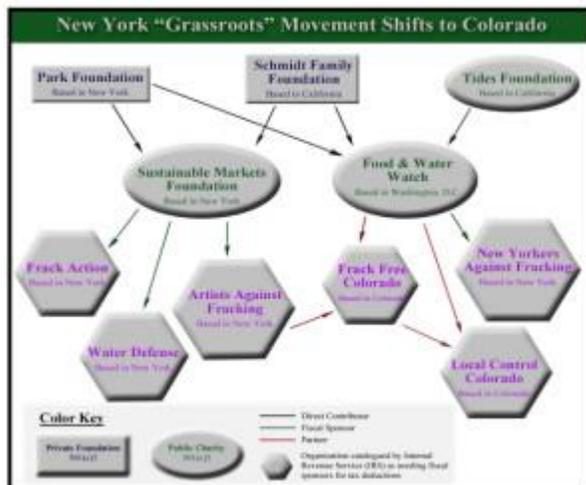
are directly affiliated with the NY-based groups already discussed. Local Control Colorado claims to be, “a coalition of community, consumer and public interest groups from across Colorado” promoting an anti-fracking ballot measure. However, they list DC-based Food & Water Watch, which is funded by CA-based Schmidt and Tides, and NY-based Park, as part of the coalition. Food & Water Watch is also listed as a partner to another member of the Local Control Colorado coalition, Frack Free Colorado (FFC). Self-described as a “collaborative, grassroots movement that works to raise awareness about the dangers of fracking,” FFC’s website states the group is “a people’s movement that consists of concerned citizens, companies ... and organizations.” However, at least two of the organizations listed as a member of FFC – Artists Against Fracking and Food & Water Watch – are based in New York and Washington, DC. Interestingly, FFC has reportedly tried to hide its partnership with another NY-based organization, Water Defense.

The attempt to keep these connections secret include removing evidence from the group’s web pages, [as first reported by CompleteColorado.com in November 2013](#).

But the connections are repeatedly clear and demonstrable, and include the names of several specific individuals:

In addition to the funding and partnership ties, these schemes have one key employee in common who binds these cross-country efforts: Russell Mendell. Mendell previously worked for three of the NY-based organizations – Frack Action, New Yorkers Against Fracking and Water Defense. While at Frack Action in November 2011, Mendell organized a rally of activists in front of the White House calling for the rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline. Mendell was also active in the Occupy Wall Street movement, once stating that Occupy was “about linking arms between the various movements ... there’s not a lot that separates the environmental movement and Occupy Wall Street.” In 2012, Mendell, along with another Water Defense employee, Ana Tinsely, left to move across the country and work for FFC in an apparent coordinated effort to apply the same activist tactics used in New York to the attack on fracking in Colorado. Overall, these schemes illustrate a model with FFC and Local Control Colorado “grassroots” coalitions that bind efforts via partnerships with billionaire-backed groups that are far from local.

The report included the following diagram:



Simon Lomax, a Denver-based energy industry consultant and spokesman for Energy In Depth, told Complete Colorado that none of the revelations are particularly surprising.

“This report confirms yet again that national ‘ban fracking’ groups and their ultra-rich donors have spent years campaigning behind the scenes to wipe out one of Colorado’s most important industries. I don’t know who they think they are fooling any more, but I must admit, it’s kind of amusing to watch guys like Russell Mendell scramble to hide their ties to Occupy Wall Street, Water Defense, Food & Water Watch and other fringe political groups,” wrote Lomax.

But this is not just about eco-left activists pushing a few ballot measures, as they did in 2013. This year, the stakes are much higher.

“Believe it or not, Congressman [Jared] Polis is siding with this cast of characters against Colorado’s working families and practically the entire business community of our state. If he throws his millions behind the activists and their cause, he’ll be bankrolling the permanent expansion of an extreme and angry form of political campaigning in Colorado that isn’t just anti-energy, but anti-business and anti-jobs,” Lomax concluded.

*crossposted from [Complete Colorado](#)*

## **Independence Institute at the “Stop the EPA Power Grab” Rally**

August 6, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Legal](#), [Legislation](#), [preferred energy](#), [renewable energy](#)

More than 400 people turned out last week for the “Stop the EPA Power Grab” rally for affordable energy just across Lincoln Avenue from the west steps of the Capitol.

Coal miners, their families, representatives of more than 20 allied mining and natural resource groups, union members, business leaders, and affordable energy activists from Colorado and many states across the Rocky Mountain region gathered to address the Environmental Protection Agency’s “listening tour” for its newly unveiled “[Clean Power Plan](#).”

The Independence Institute was a co-sponsor of the event, along with Americans for Prosperity-Colorado, the Colorado Mining Association, and several other business and civic groups from Wyoming, Montana, and Utah. Union groups represented included the AFL-CIO of Wyoming and Boilermakers of Montana.

Over the next two years, the EPA expects each state to develop its own plan to reduce carbon emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels.

These regulations are designed to hurt coal—and by extension, will harm low income, minorities, the elderly, and rural communities that rely on coal for affordable, reliable energy. The rule will likely artificially raise the price of electricity substantially, while inefficient and more expensive sources of energy are substituted.

While agnostic on the question of energy sources, the Independence Institute is not agnostic on the intrusion of government in the free market energy arena, and believes that each state’s energy mix should be market-driven, not shaped by onerous and far-reaching regulations that stifle competition and raise electricity rates.

That was the message the Independence Institute wished to share with the attendees last week.

The text of my speech, more or less as delivered:

Good afternoon! My name is Michael Sandoval and I’m an energy policy analyst and investigative reporter for the Independence Institute, and I’d like to tell you a little bit about how mining brought my family to Colorado 86 years ago.

More than 100 years ago, my great-grandfather Anthony, a poor Italian immigrant, moved to Utah to mine coal and achieve the American Dream—earn a living for his growing family. With the money he earned from coal mining, he moved to Denver’s Little Italy, and in 1928, along with his son—my grandfather—he purchased a grocery store that was a fixture in the Italian-American community for 7 decades, eventually becoming an historic landmark.

I stand before you a product of that rich mining heritage, and I am deeply grateful for it.

I also stand WITH you. I will NOT let the EPA CRUCIFY COAL—to use the words of Al Armendariz, former EPA administrator and now Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaigner.

Our natural resources are both a blessing and a driving economic force in our region. They provide tens of thousands of good-paying jobs and they keep the lights on and, this time of year, the air conditioning running not just for us but for our most vulnerable community members.

But EPA outsiders have decided that a different energy path should be followed. They pay lip service to those affected by having a handful of “listening tours” AFTER they’ve decided which predetermined policy course they should undertake.

That is why we are here today. To let the EPA know that we already have ABUNDANT AFFORDABLE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, RELIABLE ENERGY.

The Independence Institute is agnostic on energy sources—we do not care if the energy comes from hydro, coal, solar, natural gas, nuclear, or wind—but we are not agnostic on the subject of government intrusion into the energy sector—free energy markets, not preferred energy mandates, should guide our economy.

Achieving our own energy mix should come from market forces as businesses and consumers choose what is best for them, not onerous regulations imposed by anonymous EPA bureaucrats.

Government agencies like the EPA or the Department of Energy should NOT be in the business of picking energy winners and losers with this proposal, which EPA DIRECTOR GINA MCCARTHY ADMITTED “ISN’T ABOUT POLLUTION CONTROL” JUST LAST WEEK IN A SENATE COMMITTEE.

THIS PITS corporate cronies—WHAT MCCARTHY DUBS “INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY” against the poor, the elderly, minorities, rural communities.

Nothing was more poignant than last October, when the EPA last made a stop at its Region 8 office, as miners and rural business owners and suppliers—along with their families—were forced to plead for their livelihoods with agency representatives.

We are here, along with all of the other organizations and friends here today, to say NO—say it with me—NO—to the EPA’s energy power grab.

DON’T BE FOOLED into thinking this is just about coal, or that hydraulic fracturing is just about natural gas. Folks, this is about an agenda for putting an end to the use of ALL of our natural resources, not just in Colorado, but in the entire Rocky Mountain West.

## **Rising Energy Prices Lead to the Highest Inflation Rate in 18 Months**

June 24, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [New Energy Economy](#), [preferred energy](#)

By *Henry Zhang*

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its monthly consumer price index report. This included statistics regarding consumer prices in May 2014 and year-to-year inflation. Of note is that in the Western Region[1], from May 2013 to May 2014, electricity prices rose 2.8 percent and total energy prices rose by 3.1 percent.[2] Compare those figures to 2.3 percent increase in average consumer prices over the same time period. In fact, according to the Denver Business Journal, the year-to-year price gain in energy was tied with medical care for the largest price gain of any major category used to calculate inflation.[3]

(Here is a screenshot of the relevant BLS Western Region data. Energy prices are boxed in red)

Also from the Denver Business Journal article:

*“The monthly increase [in the West] was largely influenced by higher prices for electricity,” BLS said. “Overall, energy costs advanced 4.6 percent over the month.”*

Ten of the 13 states that comprise the BLS’ Western Region have some sort of renewable portfolio mandate over the next 15 years. This means that the state must generate a certain proportion of its electricity from renewable sources.[4] For states like Colorado that have been endowed with plentiful coal reserves, this requires replacing electricity from coal, which is relatively inexpensive, with electricity from wind and solar, which is relatively expensive. This, in turn, leads to higher electricity prices, which hurt businesses and consumers alike and can “inflict significant harm on the state economy.” [5]

On a national level, where 37 out of the 50 states have enacted renewable portfolio standards or goals, consumer prices rose 2.1 percent from May 2013 to May 2014 while electricity prices rose

3.6 percent and total energy prices rose 3.3 percent. For the US, like for the Western Region, energy prices experienced the largest percentage increase of all of the major consumption categories used to calculate inflation.

From 2004, when Colorado's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was passed, to 2012, the latest year for which data is available, the average retail price of electricity for all sectors increased from 6.95 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to 9.39 cents per kWh, a 35 percent increase.<sup>[6]</sup> This is equivalent to a 3.76 percent average annual increase. For residential consumers of electricity, the retail price rose from 8.42 cents per kWh in 2004 to 11.46 cents per kWh in 2012. This is a 36 percent increase, equivalent to an average annual increase of 3.85 percent. In the eight years after the RPS was passed, both figures for the annual growth rate in the price of electricity *are greater than* the average rate of inflation.

For comparison purposes, in the eight years leading up to 2004 (1996-2004), average retail electricity prices only rose 15 percent, from 6.05 cents per kWh to 6.95 cents per kWh. This is an annualized growth rate of 1.73 percent. What more, for residential consumers, the annualized growth rate from 1996 to 2004 was just 1.46 percent. Thus, in the eight years before the RPS was passed, both figures for the annual growth rate in the price of electricity *are less than* the average rate of inflation. For a typical Colorado household,<sup>[7]</sup> which spends around \$1065 per year on electricity,<sup>[8]</sup> the difference between an annual 3.85 percent rate increase and an annual 1.46 percent rate increase is an *extra* \$270, per household, spent just on electricity over the course of 10 years. Furthermore, this number is much lower than the true cost of the RPS to Colorado households. It doesn't take into account the billions of taxpayer dollars that have gone to the energy sources, like wind and solar, which contribute to the rapid rise in electricity prices.

Affordable energy and electricity prices are the bedrock of a strong, healthy economy. Increases in the price of electricity that outpace inflation and real income growth squeeze the spending power of all consumers. Ordinary people like you and me need affordable, dependable electricity for a myriad of purposes that enhance our standard of living. Businesses need a steady electricity supply to produce the goods and services that we consume. A justification of the cost of rapidly increasing electricity prices would require more than the rhetoric of environmental benefits. It would require clear evidence, from detailed, rigorous analyses, that the added value of environmental benefits exceeds the lost jobs and economic malaise caused by higher electricity prices.

*Henry Zhang is a Future Leaders summer intern. He is a rising sophomore at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, majoring in mathematics and economics.*

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Western region consists of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming ([link](#))

<sup>[2]</sup> BLS West Report ([link](#))

<sup>[3]</sup> Mark Harden, *Denver Business Journal*. "Biggest annual price gain since 2012 in Colorado, the West" ([link](#))

[4] Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE) map ([link](#))

[5] Heartland Institute study on Colorado's RPS ([link](#))

[6] Data from Energy Information Administration (EIA) ([link](#))

[7] US Census Bureau: Colorado Quick Facts ([link](#))

[8]  $775 \text{ kWh/month} * 12 \text{ months/year} * 11.46 \text{ cents/kWh} * (1.0385/1.0146)^{10} = \$1325$ , which is \$270 greater than \$1065

Tags: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), [Department of Labor](#), [energy costs](#), [preferred energy](#), [preferred energy mandate](#), [renewable energy](#), [Renewable Portfolio Standard](#)

## [Sputtering Wind Energy Prompts Transmission Cost Concerns from Xcel](#)

May 28, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [preferred energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [wind energy](#)

Growing transmission costs for wind-generated electricity have prompted Xcel Energy to seek approval for rate hikes to smaller utilities using [Xcel's transmission lines to reach their consumers](#):

Xcel wants the utilities to pay for its costs associated with having supplies of reserve power ready to go in case the wind suddenly dies, said Terri Eaton, Xcel's director of federal regulatory and compliance efforts.

Currently, those costs are paid by Xcel's business and residential customers, Eaton said.

If the transmission lines customers can supply their own back-up power supplies, they wouldn't be charged under the proposed rates, she said.

Readily available, back-up power supplies are critical to keep the transmission grid in balance and avoid blackouts that can occur when a big source of power suddenly disappears, Eaton said.

Xcel's hikes would hit rural cooperatives and other utilities should the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approve the rate hike at the beginning of 2015.

But what, exactly, does Eaton mean when she refers to "reserve power ready to go in case the wind suddenly dies"?

"We've seen some dramatic wind fall-offs in really short periods of time," Eaton said.

**Xcel has already experienced such falls offs, when “several hundreds of megawatts of wind” drops dramatically — and swiftly — due to changes in the wind, she said.**

“Sometimes the wind is just howling, and an hour later the wind has calmed — and it’s in those circumstances that we need to have reserves available to pick up the load,” Eaton said.

In such cases, backup power supplies typically come from natural gas-fueled power plants, she said.

The tariff proposed by Xcel would help cover the costs when the wind “suddenly dies.”

The intermittency of wind has been widely discussed, and no amount of forecasting or improved efficiency will spin a wind turbine’s blades if the wind isn’t blowing.

In 2012, [a study examined wind generation in Illinois](#) at the height of a summer heat wave, when energy demands rise to yearly highs. The author found that just 5 percent of installed wind capacity was available during that outbreak of record temperatures, and at times, “virtually nonexistent.”

Earlier this year, wind energy proponents touted the example provided in Texas—wind had saved the day. [But a closer examination](#) of the figures from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) demonstrated that contrary to claims that wind had bailed out conventional sources of electricity by ensuring grid reliability, wind had actually fallen so substantially that Texas turned to other sources to meet the extra 1,000 megawatts of demand on January 6. Both scheduled and unscheduled plant closure elsewhere had left Texas with a gap during a record cold snap, a gap that wind was unable to fill.

As the [Institute for Energy Research wrote in January](#), only 3.2 percent of the energy needs of the Texas grid operated by ERCOT came from wind, while 83 percent of Texas wind turbines “were unavailable during peak demand.”

ERCOT itself continues to rate its “wind power at 8.7 percent of its installed capacity” for 2014 during the periods of highest demands, which typically occur in mid-to-late summer. For nearly 12,000 megawatts of installed wind capacity, only 990 megawatts are considered reliable for forecasts computed by ERCOT for 2014. That’s like having the equivalent of 12 1,000 megawatt power plants built and only 1 online when summer energy demand spikes.

As a percentage, [ERCOT figures wind to provide just 1.3 percent](#) of the total amount of energy it needs this summer, rising to 2.2 percent by 2017 according to its own projections.

As for Colorado, under Senate Bill 252, rural cooperatives must reach 20 percent renewable energy by 2020.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association spokesman Lee Boughey acknowledged the rising costs of integrating ever-greater amounts of intermittent energy supplies like wind.

“As more intermittent resources are added in the region, we understand the need to address the higher costs of integrating and balancing power,” Boughey told the *Denver Business Journal*.

Those costs were [highlighted in a March post](#) that examined the integration of wind and other intermittent energy sources to the reliability of the grid operated by Public Service and regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), under the state’s preferred energy mandate:

The concern over infrastructure costs and the cost to ratepayers, as well as the challenge of incorporating ever-larger amounts of intermittent generation sources like solar and wind, is not a new topic at the PUC.

In June 2012 comments by PUC staff engineer Inez Dominguez indicated that off-peak load and wind generation in particular was “alarming.”

The integration of intermittent sources like wind would overwhelm the system, either with higher costs or decreased reliability. Bringing in wind and curtailing conventional, coal-fired generation during off-peak periods would result “in an economic penalty to the Public Service customers because more expensive wind generation would be supplying their load.”

Cutting off the wind, however, would also penalize ratepayers, as the “take or pay” agreements give wind first priority.

But the Public Service engineer also highlighted reliability concerns. “In its simplest terms as it concerns the customers, reliability deals with keeping the lights on. This reliability issue may occur when the wind suddenly stops blowing and a significant amount of wind generation is lost to the balancing authority,” Dominguez said.

“When this event happens, the balancing authority needs to replace the lost generation quickly enough to keep from tripping off the load. This means that the generation in reserve to cover such an event has to be quick enough in its response to cover the lost generation,” Dominguez continued.

For Colorado ratepayers, this backup generation comes from “gas fired combustion turbine generation reserves” that displace “more economic base load coal fired generation,” only adding to the cost, and “complexity” of the load balancing requirements.

According to Dominguez, these examples suggested a “flag that Public Service may have too much wind generation.”

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“While it is uncertain why they operate in the shadows and what they are hiding, what is clear is that these individuals and foundations go to tremendous lengths to avoid public association with the far-left environmental movement they so generously fund,” the report authors wrote.

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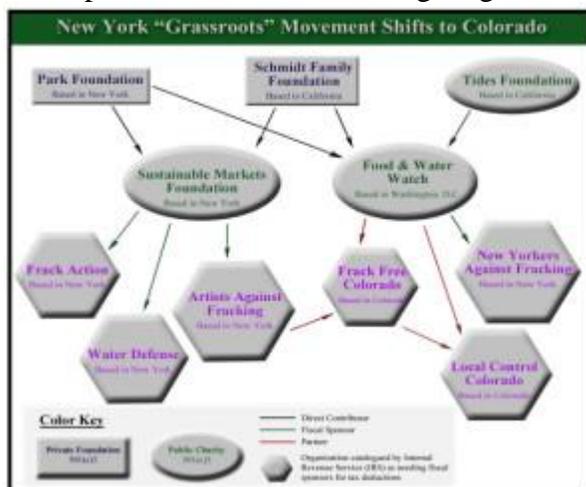
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Tags: [Artists Against Fracking](#), [Environment and Public Works Committee](#), [Food and Water Watch](#), [Frack Free CO](#), [fracking](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [Local Control Colorado](#), [Russell Mendell](#), [Shane Davis](#), [Tom Steyer](#), [US Senate](#), [Water Defense](#)

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Our natural resources are both a blessing and a driving economic force in our region. They provide tens of thousands of good-paying jobs and they keep the lights on and, this time of year, the air conditioning running not just for us but for our most vulnerable community members.

But EPA outsiders have decided that a different energy path should be followed. They pay lip service to those affected by having a handful of “listening tours” AFTER they've decided which predetermined policy course they should undertake.

That is why we are here today. To let the EPA know that we already have ABUNDANT AFFORDABLE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, RELIABLE ENERGY.

The Independence Institute is agnostic on energy sources—we do not care if the energy comes from hydro, coal, solar, natural gas, nuclear, or wind—but we are not agnostic on the subject of

government intrusion into the energy sector—free energy markets, not preferred energy mandates, should guide our economy.

Achieving our own energy mix should come from market forces as businesses and consumers choose what is best for them, not onerous regulations imposed by anonymous EPA bureaucrats.

Government agencies like the EPA or the Department of Energy should NOT be in the business of picking energy winners and losers with this proposal, which EPA DIRECTOR GINA MCCARTHY ADMITTED “ISN’T ABOUT POLLUTION CONTROL” JUST LAST WEEK IN A SENATE COMMITTEE.

THIS PITS corporate cronies—WHAT MCCARTHY DUBS “INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY” against the poor, the elderly, minorities, rural communities.

Nothing was more poignant than last October, when the EPA last made a stop at its Region 8 office, as miners and rural business owners and suppliers—along with their families—were forced to plead for their livelihoods with agency representatives.

We are here, along with all of the other organizations and friends here today, to say NO—say it with me—NO—to the EPA’s energy power grab.

DON’T BE FOOLED into thinking this is just about coal, or that hydraulic fracturing is just about natural gas. Folks, this is about an agenda for putting an end to the use of ALL of our natural resources, not just in Colorado, but in the entire Rocky Mountain West.

Tags: [AFL-CIO](#), [Americans for Prosperity](#), [carbon emissions](#), [carbon regulations](#), [Colorado Mining Association](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [epa](#), [independence institute](#), [preferred energy](#)

## **Rising Energy Prices Lead to the Highest Inflation Rate in 18 Months**

June 24, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [New Energy Economy](#), [preferred energy](#)

*By Henry Zhang*

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its monthly consumer price index report. This included statistics regarding consumer prices in May 2014 and year-to-year inflation. Of note is that in the Western Region<sup>[1]</sup>, from May 2013 to May 2014, electricity prices rose 2.8 percent and total energy prices rose by 3.1 percent.<sup>[2]</sup> Compare those figures to 2.3 percent increase in average consumer prices over the same time period. In fact, according to the Denver

Business Journal, the year-to-year price gain in energy was tied with medical care for the largest price gain of any major category used to calculate inflation.[3]

Also from the Denver Business Journal article:

*“The monthly increase [in the West] was largely influenced by higher prices for electricity,” BLS said. “Overall, energy costs advanced 4.6 percent over the month.”*

Ten of the 13 states that comprise the BLS’ Western Region have some sort of renewable portfolio mandate over the next 15 years. This means that the state must generate a certain proportion of its electricity from renewable sources.[4] For states like Colorado that have been endowed with plentiful coal reserves, this requires replacing electricity from coal, which is relatively inexpensive, with electricity from wind and solar, which is relatively expensive. This, in turn, leads to higher electricity prices, which hurt businesses and consumers alike and can “inflict significant harm on the state economy.” [5]

On a national level, where 37 out of the 50 states have enacted renewable portfolio standards or goals, consumer prices rose 2.1 percent from May 2013 to May 2014 while electricity prices rose 3.6 percent and total energy prices rose 3.3 percent. For the US, like for the Western Region, energy prices experienced the largest percentage increase of all of the major consumption categories used to calculate inflation.

From 2004, when Colorado’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was passed, to 2012, the latest year for which data is available, the average retail price of electricity for all sectors increased from 6.95 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to 9.39 cents per kWh, a 35 percent increase.[6] This is equivalent to a 3.76 percent average annual increase. For residential consumers of electricity, the retail price rose from 8.42 cents per kWh in 2004 to 11.46 cents per kWh in 2012. This is a 36 percent increase, equivalent to an average annual increase of 3.85 percent. In the eight years after the RPS was passed, both figures for the annual growth rate in the price of electricity *are greater than* the average rate of inflation.

For comparison purposes, in the eight years leading up to 2004 (1996-2004), average retail electricity prices only rose 15 percent, from 6.05 cents per kWh to 6.95 cents per kWh. This is an annualized growth rate of 1.73 percent. What more, for residential consumers, the annualized growth rate from 1996 to 2004 was just 1.46 percent. Thus, in the eight years before the RPS was passed, both figures for the annual growth rate in the price of electricity *are less than* the average rate of inflation. For a typical Colorado household,[7] which spends around \$1065 per year on electricity,[8] the difference between an annual 3.85 percent rate increase and an annual 1.46 percent rate increase is an *extra* \$270, per household, spent just on electricity over the course of 10 years. Furthermore, this number is much lower than the true cost of the RPS to Colorado households. It doesn’t take into account the billions of taxpayer dollars that have gone to the energy sources, like wind and solar, which contribute to the rapid rise in electricity prices.

Affordable energy and electricity prices are the bedrock of a strong, healthy economy. Increases in the price of electricity that outpace inflation and real income growth squeeze the spending power of all consumers. Ordinary people like you and me need affordable, dependable electricity

for a myriad of purposes that enhance our standard of living. Businesses need a steady electricity supply to produce the goods and services that we consume. A justification of the cost of rapidly increasing electricity prices would require more than the rhetoric of environmental benefits. It would require clear evidence, from detailed, rigorous analyses, that the added value of environmental benefits exceeds the lost jobs and economic malaise caused by higher electricity prices.

*Henry Zhang is a Future Leaders summer intern. He is a rising sophomore at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, majoring in mathematics and economics.*

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[1] The Western region consists of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming ([link](#))

[2] BLS West Report ([link](#))

[3] Mark Harden, *Denver Business Journal*. “Biggest annual price gain since 2012 in Colorado, the West” ([link](#))

[4] Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE) map ([link](#))

[5] Heartland Institute study on Colorado’s RPS ([link](#))

[6] Data from Energy Information Administration (EIA) ([link](#))

[7] US Census Bureau: Colorado Quick Facts ([link](#))

[8]  $775 \text{ kWh/month} * 12 \text{ months/year} * 11.46 \text{ cents/kWh} * (1.0385/1.0146)^{10} = \$1325$ , which is \$270 greater than \$1065

Tags: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), [Department of Labor](#), [energy costs](#), [preferred energy](#), [preferred energy mandate](#), [renewable energy](#), [Renewable Portfolio Standard](#)

## [Sputtering Wind Energy Prompts Transmission Cost Concerns from Xcel](#)

May 28, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [preferred energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [wind energy](#)

Growing transmission costs for wind-generated electricity have prompted Xcel Energy to seek approval for rate hikes to smaller utilities using [Xcel’s transmission lines to reach their consumers](#):

Xcel wants the utilities to pay for its costs associated with having supplies of reserve power ready to go in case the wind suddenly dies, said Terri Eaton, Xcel's director of federal regulatory and compliance efforts.

Currently, those costs are paid by Xcel's business and residential customers, Eaton said.

If the transmission lines customers can supply their own back-up power supplies, they wouldn't be charged under the proposed rates, she said.

Readily available, back-up power supplies are critical to keep the transmission grid in balance and avoid blackouts that can occur when a big source of power suddenly disappears, Eaton said.

Xcel's hikes would hit rural cooperatives and other utilities should the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approve the rate hike at the beginning of 2015.

But what, exactly, does Eaton mean when she refers to "reserve power ready to go in case the wind suddenly dies"?

"We've seen some dramatic wind fall-offs in really short periods of time," Eaton said.

**Xcel has already experienced such falls offs, when "several hundreds of megawatts of wind" drops dramatically — and swiftly — due to changes in the wind, she said.**

"Sometimes the wind is just howling, and an hour later the wind has calmed — and it's in those circumstances that we need to have reserves available to pick up the load," Eaton said.

In such cases, backup power supplies typically come from natural gas-fueled power plants, she said.

The tariff proposed by Xcel would help cover the costs when the wind "suddenly dies."

The intermittency of wind has been widely discussed, and no amount of forecasting or improved efficiency will spin a wind turbine's blades if the wind isn't blowing.

In 2012, [a study examined wind generation in Illinois](#) at the height of a summer heat wave, when energy demands rise to yearly highs. The author found that just 5 percent of installed wind capacity was available during that outbreak of record temperatures, and at times, "virtually nonexistent."

Earlier this year, wind energy proponents touted the example provided in Texas—wind had saved the day. [But a closer examination](#) of the figures from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) demonstrated that contrary to claims that wind had bailed out conventional sources of electricity by ensuring grid reliability, wind had actually fallen so substantially that Texas turned to other sources to meet the extra 1,000 megawatts of demand on January 6. Both scheduled and unscheduled plant closure elsewhere had left Texas with a gap during a record cold snap, a gap that wind was unable to fill.

As the [Institute for Energy Research wrote in January](#), only 3.2 percent of the energy needs of the Texas grid operated by ERCOT came from wind, while 83 percent of Texas wind turbines “were unavailable during peak demand.”

ERCOT itself continues to rate its “wind power at 8.7 percent of its installed capacity” for 2014 during the periods of highest demands, which typically occur in mid-to-late summer. For nearly 12,000 megawatts of installed wind capacity, only 990 megawatts are considered reliable for forecasts computed by ERCOT for 2014. That’s like having the equivalent of 12 1,000 megawatt power plants built and only 1 online when summer energy demand spikes.

As a percentage, [ERCOT figures wind to provide just 1.3 percent](#) of the total amount of energy it needs this summer, rising to 2.2 percent by 2017 according to its own projections.

As for Colorado, under Senate Bill 252, rural cooperatives must reach 20 percent renewable energy by 2020.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association spokesman Lee Boughey acknowledged the rising costs of integrating ever-greater amounts of intermittent energy supplies like wind.

“As more intermittent resources are added in the region, we understand the need to address the higher costs of integrating and balancing power,” Boughey told the *Denver Business Journal*.

Those costs were [highlighted in a March post](#) that examined the integration of wind and other intermittent energy sources to the reliability of the grid operated by Public Service and regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), under the state’s preferred energy mandate:

The concern over infrastructure costs and the cost to ratepayers, as well as the challenge of incorporating ever-larger amounts of intermittent generation sources like solar and wind, is not a new topic at the PUC.

In June 2012 comments by PUC staff engineer Inez Dominguez indicated that off-peak load and wind generation in particular was “alarming.”

The integration of intermittent sources like wind would overwhelm the system, either with higher costs or decreased reliability. Bringing in wind and curtailing conventional, coal-fired generation during off-peak periods would result “in an economic penalty to the Public Service customers because more expensive wind generation would be supplying their load.”

Cutting off the wind, however, would also penalize ratepayers, as the “take or pay” agreements give wind first priority.

But the Public Service engineer also highlighted reliability concerns. “In its simplest terms as it concerns the customers, reliability deals with keeping the lights on. This reliability issue may occur when the wind suddenly stops blowing and a significant amount of wind generation is lost to the balancing authority,” Dominguez said.

“When this event happens, the balancing authority needs to replace the lost generation quickly enough to keep from tripping off the load. This means that the generation in reserve to cover such an event has to be quick enough in its response to cover the lost generation,” Dominguez continued.

For Colorado ratepayers, this backup generation comes from “gas fired combustion turbine generation reserves” that displace “more economic base load coal fired generation,” only adding to the cost, and “complexity” of the load balancing requirements.

According to Dominguez, these examples suggested a “flag that Public Service may have too much wind generation.”

Tags: [American Wind Energy Association](#), [coal](#), [colorado](#), [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#), [Green energy](#), [Illinois](#), [natural gas](#), [preferred energy mandate](#), [Public Service Company of Colorado](#), [PUC](#), [renewable energy](#), [rural cooperatives](#), [tariff](#), [Texas](#), [Vestas](#), [wind energy](#), [Xcel Energy](#)

## [Solar “Mega-trap” Kills Birds at California Power Plant](#)

May 5, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#)

Solar power generating facilities in Southern California have been dubbed “mega-traps” for their ability to attract and kill multiple species in a variety of manners including solar flux injury, also known as “singeing,” according to a report from the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory issued in April.

“At times birds flew into the solar flux and ignited,” the authors wrote.

The toll on Southern California wildlife from three solar power plants [is just beginning to be revealed](#):

The Ivanpah solar thermal power plant in the Southern California desert supplies enough carbon-free electricity to power 140,000 homes. For birds, bats and butterflies, though, the futuristic project is the Death Star, incinerating anything that flies through a “solar flux” field that generates temperatures of 800 degree Fahrenheit when 300,000 mirrors focus the sun on a water-filled boilers that sit on top three 459-foot towers.

“It appears Ivanpah may act as a ‘mega-trap,’ attracting insects which in turn attract insect-eating birds, which are incapacitated by solar-flux injury, thus attracting predators and creating an entire food chain vulnerable to injury and death,” concluded scientists with the National Fish and

Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in a [report that investigated 233 bird deaths](#) representing 71 species at three Southern California solar power plants.

“Ivanpah employees called such immolations ‘streamers,’” said *The Atlantic*.

US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement staff “observed an average of one streamer event every two minutes.”

From the report:

When OLE staff visited Ivanpah, we observed many streamer events. It is claimed that these events represent the combustion of loose debris or insects. Although some of the events are likely that, there were instances where the amount of smoke produced by the ignition could only be explained by a large flammable biomass such as a bird. Indeed OLE observed birds entering the solar flux and igniting, consequently becoming a streamer.

When the Ivanpah solar plant was inaugurated in earlier this year, we noted about reports of birds being killed—the “singeing” of birds in the air due to the reflective panels heating the surrounding air to such high temperatures near the California plant’s towers.

At the time, [we wrote](#):

All power sources involve tradeoffs, but to date, wind and solar have generally avoided discussing the topic, often quickly shifting to pointing out the costs of other energy sources in defending their own environmental impacts.

Those tradeoffs included the very distinct possibility of harm to migratory birds and other wildlife.

According to the April report bats—also attracted by the insects drawn to the solar arrays—have also been found near the facilities. These include species deemed “sensitive” in California by the Bureau of Land Management.

Regulatory agencies considered those costs for Ivanpah:

*Ivanpah can be seen as a success story and a cautionary tale, highlighting the inevitable tradeoffs between the need for cleaner power and the loss of fragile, open land. The California Energy Commission concluded that while the solar plant would impose “significant impacts on the environment ... the benefits the project would provide override those impacts.”*

Those full impacts won’t even be known for another couple years, as a two-year study is completed on Ivanpah’s effect on wildlife.

The report also notes that gathering specific data about the actual temperatures involved at Ivanpah have been difficult.

“Despite repeated requests, we have been unsuccessful in obtaining technical data relating to the temperature associated with solar flux at the Ivanpah facility,” the authors wrote.

The report authors quoted a Discovery TV channel program that pegged the possible top temperature at the top of the solar tower above 3,600 degrees Fahrenheit, enough to melt steel. In order to regulate the tower at a much lower temperature, Ivanpah’s operators must turn only a percentage of heliostats at the solar receiver.

They estimated that temperatures across the solar field ranged from 200 to 900 degrees Fahrenheit.

The solar facility at Ivanpah is a darling of the Obama administration and [received \\$1.6 billion in loan guarantees](#).

“This project speaks for itself. Just look at the 170,000 shining heliostat mirrors and the three towers that would dwarf the Statue of Liberty,” said Ernest Moniz, Obama’s energy secretary, as reported by *The Daily Caller*.

Tags: [birds](#), [California](#), [California Energy Commission](#), [Department of Energy](#), [Ernest Moniz](#), [Green energy](#), [Ivanpah](#), [loan guarantee](#), [Obama administration](#), [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#)

## **NREL Employee Threatens Reporter, Issues Internal Email About Threats To NREL**

April 23, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Legal](#), [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#)

From [Watchdog.org](#):

A secret government energy lab here went on heightened alert after one of its employees used Twitter to threaten mass murder against Watchdog reporters, according to internal memos and emails received under the Freedom of Information Act.

But the added security measures utilized by the National Renewable Energy Lab weren’t to isolate and chastise staffer Kerrilee Crosby, who used Twitter in late 2012 to advocate what she called “a murderous rampage.”

Instead, the lab was concerned because an unidentified individual sent Crosby an email labeled “Because you deserve to die” — the same words Crosby used in her threat against Watchdog.

It was the subsequent threat from an unidentified individual (the name was redacted in the Freedom of Information Act documents released) that prompted this reaction from NREL:

“Details are still being assembled and the likelihood of making contact remains low.

A person named (redacted) has made a veiled threat against NREL employee Kerry Crosby.

Should we come into contact with (redacted) we are to call 911 immediately... Keep in mind, we cannot be sure this is the right name. Be very suspicious of anyone unexpected looking for Kerry Crosby.

Jeffco is already engaged in this issue.”

According to Watchdog, while the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department pooh-poohed the threat made by Crosby against the reporting outfit by refusing to take a police report, it appeared fully prepared to provide assistance to NREL—by opening a case and visiting the agency’s campus.

NREL’s security office issued these warnings to workers:

1. Be aware of an increase in anger at NREL and our mission
2. NREL Security will step up vehicle searches
3. Be prepared for an increase in press inquiries and amateur information seekers
4. Understand that this story may inspire others to be angry toward NREL, government spending, green energy, people who make threats, etc.

“The number of web-based news sources repeating the Watchdog story continues to grow,” the memo said.

Crosby drew in the Independence Institute’s Energy Policy Center director Amy Oliver Cooke into the original series of threatening tweets she made in late 2012 when she included a link to a photo of Cooke.

“I can’t remember where I left my gun, though. Found it! <http://t.co/MuOpukem>,” [she tweeted](#). The original link has been removed.

Tags: [Amy Oliver Cooke](#), [FOIA](#), [Freedom of Information Act](#), [independence institute](#), [Jefferson County Sheriff's Department](#), [Kerrilee Crosby](#), [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#), [NREL](#), [Tori Richards](#), [Watchdog.org](#)

## [Colorado Green Schools](#)

April 22, 2014 by [jlongo](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#), [wind energy](#)

IP-1-2014 (January 2014)

Author: Todd Myers

[PDF of full Issue Paper](#)

**Introduction:**

According to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Chipeda Elementary in Colorado's Mesa Valley School District 51 is not simply a green school; it is in fact a green model for other schools.

The USGBC promotes Chipeda as a “case study” of what green schools can achieve in a range of areas, including reduction of environmental impact and lower energy use.<sup>1</sup> The case study notes the school is more energy efficient and uses less water than other, comparable schools. Utility data, however, tells a different story. A look at the numbers shows the school actually uses more energy than do its peers.

Tags: [colorado green schools](#), [todd myers](#)

## [Senate Committee Report on Billionaires and Eco-Left Activism in Colorado Draws on II Research](#)

August 12, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [preferred energy](#)

*A key section of the July report issued by the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee focusing on Colorado environmental activists draws from work that first appeared at the Independence Institute's Complete Colorado blog.*

In a wide ranging, heavily footnoted report released July 30, the Minority Staff of the United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works demonstrates the confluence of the Environmental Protection Agency, eco-left activists, and what it calls the “Billionaire's Club” in a complicated, tax-evading, [multi-million dollar philanthropy scheme of dark money](#):

“Through these arrangements, the Billionaire's Club gains access to a close knit network of likeminded funders, environmental activists, and government bureaucrats who specialize in manufacturing phony “grassroots” movements and in promoting bogus propaganda disguised as science and news to spread an anti-fossil energy message to the unknowing public. Not only is the system incredibly sophisticated, but the Club's attorneys and accountants have mastered the loopholes and gray areas in the tax code, which enable them to obtain a full tax benefit, even when the recipient of the grant is not recognized as a public charity, and even if the money indirectly and impermissibly funds political activities.”

The report finds fault with the billionaires' "scheme to keep their efforts hidden and far removed from the political stage," which they characterized as "deliberate, meticulous, and intended to mislead the public."

"While it is uncertain why they operate in the shadows and what they are hiding, what is clear is that these individuals and foundations go to tremendous lengths to avoid public association with the far-left environmental movement they so generously fund," the report authors wrote.

Highlighting the byzantine tax procedures used to cloak the various foundations and individual donors, the report used case studies of efforts targeted in several different states, including Colorado.

In the section on activism targeting hydraulic fracturing, the report singled out New York anti-fracking efforts that later manifested in Colorado:

The same billionaire foundations behind the New York anti-fracking efforts have also moved into Colorado through two coalitions – Local Control Colorado and Frack Free Colorado, which are directly affiliated with the NY-based groups already discussed. Local Control Colorado claims to be, "a coalition of community, consumer and public interest groups from across Colorado" promoting an anti-fracking ballot measure. However, they list DC-based Food & Water Watch, which is funded by CA-based Schmidt and Tides, and NY-based Park, as part of the coalition. Food & Water Watch is also listed as a partner to another member of the Local Control Colorado coalition, Frack Free Colorado (FFC). Self-described as a "collaborative, grassroots movement that works to raise awareness about the dangers of fracking," FFC's website states the group is "a people's movement that consists of concerned citizens, companies ... and organizations." However, at least two of the organizations listed as a member of FFC – Artists Against Fracking and Food & Water Watch – are based in New York and Washington, DC. Interestingly, FFC has reportedly tried to hide its partnership with another NY-based organization, Water Defense.

The attempt to keep these connections secret include removing evidence from the group's web pages, [as first reported by CompleteColorado.com in November 2013](#).

But the connections are repeatedly clear and demonstrable, and include the names of several specific individuals:

In addition to the funding and partnership ties, these schemes have one key employee in common who binds these cross-country efforts: Russell Mendell. Mendell previously worked for three of the NY-based organizations – Frack Action, New Yorkers Against Fracking and Water Defense. While at Frack Action in November 2011, Mendell organized a rally of activists in front of the White House calling for the rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline. Mendell was also active in the Occupy Wall Street movement, once stating that Occupy was "about linking arms between the various movements ... there's not a lot that separates the environmental movement and Occupy Wall Street." In 2012, Mendell, along with another Water Defense employee, Ana Tinsely, left to move across the country and work for FFC in an apparent coordinated effort to apply the same activist tactics used in New York to the attack on fracking in Colorado. Overall,

these schemes illustrate a model with FFC and Local Control Colorado “grassroots” coalitions that bind efforts via partnerships with billionaire-backed groups that are far from local.

The report included the following diagram:



Simon Lomax, a Denver-based energy industry consultant and spokesman for Energy In Depth, told Complete Colorado that none of the revelations are particularly surprising.

“This report confirms yet again that national ‘ban fracking’ groups and their ultra-rich donors have spent years campaigning behind the scenes to wipe out one of Colorado’s most important industries. I don’t know who they think they are fooling any more, but I must admit, it’s kind of amusing to watch guys like Russell Mendell scramble to hide their ties to Occupy Wall Street, Water Defense, Food & Water Watch and other fringe political groups,” wrote Lomax.

But this is not just about eco-left activists pushing a few ballot measures, as they did in 2013. This year, the stakes are much higher.

“Believe it or not, Congressman [Jared] Polis is siding with this cast of characters against Colorado’s working families and practically the entire business community of our state. If he throws his millions behind the activists and their cause, he’ll be bankrolling the permanent expansion of an extreme and angry form of political campaigning in Colorado that isn’t just anti-energy, but anti-business and anti-jobs,” Lomax concluded.

*crossposted from [Complete Colorado](#)*

Tags: [Artists Against Fracking](#), [Environment and Public Works Committee](#), [Food and Water Watch](#), [Frack Free CO](#), [fracking](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [Local Control Colorado](#), [Russell Mendell](#), [Shane Davis](#), [Tom Steyer](#), [US Senate](#), [Water Defense](#)

## [Independence Institute at the “Stop the EPA Power Grab” Rally](#)

August 6, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Legal](#), [Legislation](#), [preferred energy](#), [renewable energy](#)

More than 400 people turned out last week for the “Stop the EPA Power Grab” rally for affordable energy just across Lincoln Avenue from the west steps of the Capitol.

Coal miners, their families, representatives of more than 20 allied mining and natural resource groups, union members, business leaders, and affordable energy activists from Colorado and many states across the Rocky Mountain region gathered to address the Environmental Protection Agency’s “listening tour” for its newly unveiled “[Clean Power Plan](#).”

The Independence Institute was a co-sponsor of the event, along with Americans for Prosperity-Colorado, the Colorado Mining Association, and several other business and civic groups from Wyoming, Montana, and Utah. Union groups represented included the AFL-CIO of Wyoming and Boilermakers of Montana.

Over the next two years, the EPA expects each state to develop its own plan to reduce carbon emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels.

These regulations are designed to hurt coal—and by extension, will harm low income, minorities, the elderly, and rural communities that rely on coal for affordable, reliable energy. The rule will likely artificially raise the price of electricity substantially, while inefficient and more expensive sources of energy are substituted.

While agnostic on the question of energy sources, the Independence Institute is not agnostic on the intrusion of government in the free market energy arena, and believes that each state’s energy mix should be market-driven, not shaped by onerous and far-reaching regulations that stifle competition and raise electricity rates.

That was the message the Independence Institute wished to share with the attendees last week.

The text of my speech, more or less as delivered:

Good afternoon! My name is Michael Sandoval and I’m an energy policy analyst and investigative reporter for the Independence Institute, and I’d like to tell you a little bit about how mining brought my family to Colorado 86 years ago.

More than 100 years ago, my great-grandfather Anthony, a poor Italian immigrant, moved to Utah to mine coal and achieve the American Dream—earn a living for his growing family. With the money he earned from coal mining, he moved to Denver’s Little Italy, and in 1928, along with his son—my grandfather—he purchased a grocery store that was a fixture in the Italian-American community for 7 decades, eventually becoming an historic landmark.

I stand before you a product of that rich mining heritage, and I am deeply grateful for it.

I also stand WITH you. I will NOT let the EPA CRUCIFY COAL—to use the words of Al Armendariz, former EPA administrator and now Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaigner.

Our natural resources are both a blessing and a driving economic force in our region. They provide tens of thousands of good-paying jobs and they keep the lights on and, this time of year, the air conditioning running not just for us but for our most vulnerable community members.

But EPA outsiders have decided that a different energy path should be followed. They pay lip service to those affected by having a handful of “listening tours” AFTER they’ve decided which predetermined policy course they should undertake.

That is why we are here today. To let the EPA know that we already have ABUNDANT AFFORDABLE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, RELIABLE ENERGY.

The Independence Institute is agnostic on energy sources—we do not care if the energy comes from hydro, coal, solar, natural gas, nuclear, or wind—but we are not agnostic on the subject of government intrusion into the energy sector—free energy markets, not preferred energy mandates, should guide our economy.

Achieving our own energy mix should come from market forces as businesses and consumers choose what is best for them, not onerous regulations imposed by anonymous EPA bureaucrats.

Government agencies like the EPA or the Department of Energy should NOT be in the business of picking energy winners and losers with this proposal, which EPA DIRECTOR GINA MCCARTHY ADMITTED “ISN’T ABOUT POLLUTION CONTROL” JUST LAST WEEK IN A SENATE COMMITTEE.

THIS PITS corporate cronies—WHAT MCCARTHY DUBS “INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY” against the poor, the elderly, minorities, rural communities.

Nothing was more poignant than last October, when the EPA last made a stop at its Region 8 office, as miners and rural business owners and suppliers—along with their families—were forced to plead for their livelihoods with agency representatives.

We are here, along with all of the other organizations and friends here today, to say NO—say it with me—NO—to the EPA’s energy power grab.

DON’T BE FOOLED into thinking this is just about coal, or that hydraulic fracturing is just about natural gas. Folks, this is about an agenda for putting an end to the use of ALL of our natural resources, not just in Colorado, but in the entire Rocky Mountain West.

Tags: [AFL-CIO](#), [Americans for Prosperity](#), [carbon emissions](#), [carbon regulations](#), [Colorado Mining Association](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [epa](#), [independence institute](#), [preferred energy](#)

# Rising Energy Prices Lead to the Highest Inflation Rate in 18 Months

June 24, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [New Energy Economy](#), [preferred energy](#)

By Henry Zhang

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its monthly consumer price index report. This included statistics regarding consumer prices in May 2014 and year-to-year inflation. Of note is that in the Western Region<sup>[1]</sup>, from May 2013 to May 2014, electricity prices rose 2.8 percent and total energy prices rose by 3.1 percent.<sup>[2]</sup> Compare those figures to 2.3 percent increase in average consumer prices over the same time period. In fact, according to the Denver Business Journal, the year-to-year price gain in energy was tied with medical care for the largest price gain of any major category used to calculate inflation.<sup>[3]</sup>

Also from the Denver Business Journal article:

*“The monthly increase [in the West] was largely influenced by higher prices for electricity,” BLS said. “Overall, energy costs advanced 4.6 percent over the month.”*

Ten of the 13 states that comprise the BLS’ Western Region have some sort of renewable portfolio mandate over the next 15 years. This means that the state must generate a certain proportion of its electricity from renewable sources.<sup>[4]</sup> For states like Colorado that have been endowed with plentiful coal reserves, this requires replacing electricity from coal, which is relatively inexpensive, with electricity from wind and solar, which is relatively expensive. This, in turn, leads to higher electricity prices, which hurt businesses and consumers alike and can “inflict significant harm on the state economy.”<sup>[5]</sup>

On a national level, where 37 out of the 50 states have enacted renewable portfolio standards or goals, consumer prices rose 2.1 percent from May 2013 to May 2014 while electricity prices rose 3.6 percent and total energy prices rose 3.3 percent. For the US, like for the Western Region, energy prices experienced the largest percentage increase of all of the major consumption categories used to calculate inflation.

From 2004, when Colorado’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was passed, to 2012, the latest year for which data is available, the average retail price of electricity for all sectors increased from 6.95 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to 9.39 cents per kWh, a 35 percent increase.<sup>[6]</sup> This is equivalent to a 3.76 percent average annual increase. For residential consumers of electricity, the retail price rose from 8.42 cents per kWh in 2004 to 11.46 cents per kWh in 2012. This is a 36 percent increase, equivalent to an average annual increase of 3.85 percent. In the eight years after the RPS was passed, both figures for the annual growth rate in the price of electricity *are greater than* the average rate of inflation.

For comparison purposes, in the eight years leading up to 2004 (1996-2004), average retail electricity prices only rose 15 percent, from 6.05 cents per kWh to 6.95 cents per kWh. This is an annualized growth rate of 1.73 percent. What more, for residential consumers, the annualized growth rate from 1996 to 2004 was just 1.46 percent. Thus, in the eight years before the RPS was passed, both figures for the annual growth rate in the price of electricity *are less than* the average rate of inflation. For a typical Colorado household,<sup>[7]</sup> which spends around \$1065 per year on electricity,<sup>[8]</sup> the difference between an annual 3.85 percent rate increase and an annual 1.46 percent rate increase is an *extra* \$270, per household, spent just on electricity over the course of 10 years. Furthermore, this number is much lower than the true cost of the RPS to Colorado households. It doesn't take into account the billions of taxpayer dollars that have gone to the energy sources, like wind and solar, which contribute to the rapid rise in electricity prices.

Affordable energy and electricity prices are the bedrock of a strong, healthy economy. Increases in the price of electricity that outpace inflation and real income growth squeeze the spending power of all consumers. Ordinary people like you and me need affordable, dependable electricity for a myriad of purposes that enhance our standard of living. Businesses need a steady electricity supply to produce the goods and services that we consume. A justification of the cost of rapidly increasing electricity prices would require more than the rhetoric of environmental benefits. It would require clear evidence, from detailed, rigorous analyses, that the added value of environmental benefits exceeds the lost jobs and economic malaise caused by higher electricity prices.

*Henry Zhang is a Future Leaders summer intern. He is a rising sophomore at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, majoring in mathematics and economics.*

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[1] The Western region consists of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming ([link](#))

[2] BLS West Report ([link](#))

[3] Mark Harden, *Denver Business Journal*. "Biggest annual price gain since 2012 in Colorado, the West" ([link](#))

[4] Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE) map ([link](#))

[5] Heartland Institute study on Colorado's RPS ([link](#))

[6] Data from Energy Information Administration (EIA) ([link](#))

[7] US Census Bureau: Colorado Quick Facts ([link](#))

[8]  $775 \text{ kWh/month} * 12 \text{ months/year} * 11.46 \text{ cents/kWh} * (1.0385/1.0146)^{10} = \$1325$ , which is \$270 greater than \$1065

Tags: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), [Department of Labor](#), [energy costs](#), [preferred energy](#), [preferred energy mandate](#), [renewable energy](#), [Renewable Portfolio Standard](#)

## [Sputtering Wind Energy Prompts Transmission Cost Concerns from Xcel](#)

May 28, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [preferred energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [wind energy](#)

Growing transmission costs for wind-generated electricity have prompted Xcel Energy to seek approval for rate hikes to smaller utilities using [Xcel's transmission lines to reach their consumers](#):

Xcel wants the utilities to pay for its costs associated with having supplies of reserve power ready to go in case the wind suddenly dies, said Terri Eaton, Xcel's director of federal regulatory and compliance efforts.

Currently, those costs are paid by Xcel's business and residential customers, Eaton said.

If the transmission lines customers can supply their own back-up power supplies, they wouldn't be charged under the proposed rates, she said.

Readily available, back-up power supplies are critical to keep the transmission grid in balance and avoid blackouts that can occur when a big source of power suddenly disappears, Eaton said.

Xcel's hikes would hit rural cooperatives and other utilities should the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approve the rate hike at the beginning of 2015.

But what, exactly, does Eaton mean when she refers to "reserve power ready to go in case the wind suddenly dies"?

"We've seen some dramatic wind fall-offs in really short periods of time," Eaton said.

**Xcel has already experienced such falls offs, when "several hundreds of megawatts of wind" drops dramatically — and swiftly — due to changes in the wind, she said.**

"Sometimes the wind is just howling, and an hour later the wind has calmed — and it's in those circumstances that we need to have reserves available to pick up the load," Eaton said.

In such cases, backup power supplies typically come from natural gas-fueled power plants, she said.

The tariff proposed by Xcel would help cover the costs when the wind "suddenly dies."

The intermittency of wind has been widely discussed, and no amount of forecasting or improved efficiency will spin a wind turbine's blades if the wind isn't blowing.

In 2012, [a study examined wind generation in Illinois](#) at the height of a summer heat wave, when energy demands rise to yearly highs. The author found that just 5 percent of installed wind capacity was available during that outbreak of record temperatures, and at times, "virtually nonexistent."

Earlier this year, wind energy proponents touted the example provided in Texas—wind had saved the day. [But a closer examination](#) of the figures from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) demonstrated that contrary to claims that wind had bailed out conventional sources of electricity by ensuring grid reliability, wind had actually fallen so substantially that Texas turned to other sources to meet the extra 1,000 megawatts of demand on January 6. Both scheduled and unscheduled plant closure elsewhere had left Texas with a gap during a record cold snap, a gap that wind was unable to fill.

As the [Institute for Energy Research wrote in January](#), only 3.2 percent of the energy needs of the Texas grid operated by ERCOT came from wind, while 83 percent of Texas wind turbines "were unavailable during peak demand."

ERCOT itself continues to rate its "wind power at 8.7 percent of its installed capacity" for 2014 during the periods of highest demands, which typically occur in mid-to-late summer. For nearly 12,000 megawatts of installed wind capacity, only 990 megawatts are considered reliable for forecasts computed by ERCOT for 2014. That's like having the equivalent of 12 1,000 megawatt power plants built and only 1 online when summer energy demand spikes.

As a percentage, [ERCOT figures wind to provide just 1.3 percent](#) of the total amount of energy it needs this summer, rising to 2.2 percent by 2017 according to its own projections.

As for Colorado, under Senate Bill 252, rural cooperatives must reach 20 percent renewable energy by 2020.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association spokesman Lee Boughey acknowledged the rising costs of integrating ever-greater amounts of intermittent energy supplies like wind.

"As more intermittent resources are added in the region, we understand the need to address the higher costs of integrating and balancing power," Boughey told the *Denver Business Journal*.

Those costs were [highlighted in a March post](#) that examined the integration of wind and other intermittent energy sources to the reliability of the grid operated by Public Service and regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), under the state's preferred energy mandate:

The concern over infrastructure costs and the cost to ratepayers, as well as the challenge of incorporating ever-larger amounts of intermittent generation sources like solar and wind, is not a new topic at the PUC.

In June 2012 comments by PUC staff engineer Inez Dominguez indicated that off-peak load and wind generation in particular was “alarming.”

The integration of intermittent sources like wind would overwhelm the system, either with higher costs or decreased reliability. Bringing in wind and curtailing conventional, coal-fired generation during off-peak periods would result “in an economic penalty to the Public Service customers because more expensive wind generation would be supplying their load.”

Cutting off the wind, however, would also penalize ratepayers, as the “take or pay” agreements give wind first priority.

But the Public Service engineer also highlighted reliability concerns. “In its simplest terms as it concerns the customers, reliability deals with keeping the lights on. This reliability issue may occur when the wind suddenly stops blowing and a significant amount of wind generation is lost to the balancing authority,” Dominguez said.

“When this event happens, the balancing authority needs to replace the lost generation quickly enough to keep from tripping off the load. This means that the generation in reserve to cover such an event has to be quick enough in its response to cover the lost generation,” Dominguez continued.

For Colorado ratepayers, this backup generation comes from “gas fired combustion turbine generation reserves” that displace “more economic base load coal fired generation,” only adding to the cost, and “complexity” of the load balancing requirements.

According to Dominguez, these examples suggested a “flag that Public Service may have too much wind generation.”

Tags: [American Wind Energy Association](#), [coal](#), [colorado](#), [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#), [Green energy](#), [Illinois](#), [natural gas](#), [preferred energy mandate](#), [Public Service Company of Colorado](#), [PUC](#), [renewable energy](#), [rural cooperatives](#), [tariff](#), [Texas](#), [Vestas](#), [wind energy](#), [Xcel Energy](#)

## **Solar “Mega-trap” Kills Birds at California Power Plant**

May 5, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#)

Solar power generating facilities in Southern California have been dubbed “mega-traps” for their ability to attract and kill multiple species in a variety of manners including solar flux injury, also known as “singeing,” according to a report from the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory issued in April.

“At times birds flew into the solar flux and ignited,” the authors wrote.

The toll on Southern California wildlife from three solar power plants [is just beginning to be revealed](#):

The Ivanpah solar thermal power plant in the Southern California desert supplies enough carbon-free electricity to power 140,000 homes. For birds, bats and butterflies, though, the futuristic project is the Death Star, incinerating anything that flies through a “solar flux” field that generates temperatures of 800 degree Fahrenheit when 300,000 mirrors focus the sun on a water-filled boilers that sit on top three 459-foot towers.

“It appears Ivanpah may act as a ‘mega-trap,’ attracting insects which in turn attract insect-eating birds, which are incapacitated by solar-flux injury, thus attracting predators and creating an entire food chain vulnerable to injury and death,” concluded scientists with the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in a [report that investigated 233 bird deaths](#) representing 71 species at three Southern California solar power plants.

“Ivanpah employees called such immolations ‘streamers,’” said *The Atlantic*.

US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement staff “observed an average of one streamer event every two minutes.”

From the report:

When OLE staff visited Ivanpah, we observed many streamer events. It is claimed that these events represent the combustion of loose debris or insects. Although some of the events are likely that, there were instances where the amount of smoke produced by the ignition could only be explained by a large flammable biomass such as a bird. Indeed OLE observed birds entering the solar flux and igniting, consequently becoming a streamer.

When the Ivanpah solar plant was inaugurated in earlier this year, we noted about reports of birds being killed—the “singeing” of birds in the air due to the reflective panels heating the surrounding air to such high temperatures near the California plant’s towers.

At the time, [we wrote](#):

All power sources involve tradeoffs, but to date, wind and solar have generally avoided discussing the topic, often quickly shifting to pointing out the costs of other energy sources in defending their own environmental impacts.

Those tradeoffs included the very distinct possibility of harm to migratory birds and other wildlife.

According to the April report bats—also attracted by the insects drawn to the solar arrays—have also been found near the facilities. These include species deemed “sensitive” in California by the Bureau of Land Management.

Regulatory agencies considered those costs for Ivanpah:

*Ivanpah can be seen as a success story and a cautionary tale, highlighting the inevitable trade-offs between the need for cleaner power and the loss of fragile, open land. The California Energy Commission concluded that while the solar plant would impose “significant impacts on the environment ... the benefits the project would provide override those impacts.”*

Those full impacts won't even be known for another couple years, as a two-year study is completed on Ivanpah's effect on wildlife.

The report also notes that gathering specific data about the actual temperatures involved at Ivanpah have been difficult.

“Despite repeated requests, we have been unsuccessful in obtaining technical data relating to the temperature associated with solar flux at the Ivanpah facility,” the authors wrote.

The report authors quoted a Discovery TV channel program that pegged the possible top temperature at the top of the solar tower above 3,600 degrees Fahrenheit, enough to melt steel. In order to regulate the tower at a much lower temperature, Ivanpah's operators must turn only a percentage of heliostats at the solar receiver.

They estimated that temperatures across the solar field ranged from 200 to 900 degrees Fahrenheit.

The solar facility at Ivanpah is a darling of the Obama administration and [received \\$1.6 billion in loan guarantees](#).

“This project speaks for itself. Just look at the 170,000 shining heliostat mirrors and the three towers that would dwarf the Statue of Liberty,” said Ernest Moniz, Obama's energy secretary, as reported by *The Daily Caller*.

Tags: [birds](#), [California](#), [California Energy Commission](#), [Department of Energy](#), [Ernest Moniz](#), [Green energy](#), [Ivanpah](#), [loan guarantee](#), [Obama administration](#), [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#)

## **NREL Employee Threatens Reporter, Issues Internal Email About Threats To NREL**

April 23, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Legal](#), [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#)

From [Watchdog.org](#):

A secret government energy lab here went on heightened alert after one of its employees used Twitter to threaten mass murder against Watchdog reporters, according to internal memos and emails received under the Freedom of Information Act.

But the added security measures utilized by the National Renewable Energy Lab weren't to isolate and chastise staffer Kerrilee Crosby, who used Twitter in late 2012 to advocate what she called "a murderous rampage."

Instead, the lab was concerned because an unidentified individual sent Crosby an email labeled "Because you deserve to die" — the same words Crosby used in her threat against Watchdog.

It was the subsequent threat from an unidentified individual (the name was redacted in the Freedom of Information Act documents released) that prompted this reaction from NREL:

"Details are still being assembled and the likelihood of making contact remains low.

A person named (redacted) has made a veiled threat against NREL employee Kerry Crosby.

Should we come into contact with (redacted) we are to call 911 immediately... Keep in mind, we cannot be sure this is the right name. Be very suspicious of anyone unexpected looking for Kerry Crosby.

Jeffco is already engaged in this issue."

According to Watchdog, while the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department pooh-poohed the threat made by Crosby against the reporting outfit by refusing to take a police report, it appeared fully prepared to provide assistance to NREL—by opening a case and visiting the agency's campus.

NREL's security office issued these warnings to workers:

1. Be aware of an increase in anger at NREL and our mission
2. NREL Security will step up vehicle searches
3. Be prepared for an increase in press inquiries and amateur information seekers
4. Understand that this story may inspire others to be angry toward NREL, government spending, green energy, people who make threats, etc.

"The number of web-based news sources repeating the Watchdog story continues to grow," the memo said.

Crosby drew in the Independence Institute's Energy Policy Center director Amy Oliver Cooke into the original series of threatening tweets she made in late 2012 when she included a link to a photo of Cooke.

"I can't remember where I left my gun, though. Found it! <http://t.co/MuOpukem>," [she tweeted](#). The original link has been removed.

Tags: [Amy Oliver Cooke](#), [FOIA](#), [Freedom of Information Act](#), [independence institute](#), [Jefferson County Sheriff's Department](#), [Kerrilee Crosby](#), [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#), [NREL](#), [Tori Richards](#), [Watchdog.org](#)

## Colorado Green Schools

April 22, 2014 by [jlongo](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#), [wind energy](#)

IP-1-2014 (January 2014)  
Author: Todd Myers

[PDF of full Issue Paper](#)

### **Introduction:**

According to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Chipeda Elementary in Colorado's Mesa Valley School District 51 is not simply a green school; it is in fact a green model for other schools.

The USGBC promotes Chipeda as a "case study" of what green schools can achieve in a range of areas, including reduction of environmental impact and lower energy use.<sup>1</sup> The case study notes the school is more energy efficient and uses less water than other, comparable schools. Utility data, however, tells a different story. A look at the numbers shows the school actually uses more energy than do its peers.

Tags: [colorado green schools](#), [todd myers](#)

## Colorado's cruel approach to energy policy

February 25, 2014 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [New Energy Economy](#), [preferred energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#), [wind energy](#)

By Amy Oliver Cooke

"Giving society cheap, abundant energy would be the equivalent of giving an idiot child a machine gun," wrote environmental doomsday prophet Dr. Paul Ehrlich in 1975.

That's a cruel statement directed at people who simply want electric lights so their children can read at night, a refrigerator to keep food from spoiling, or a heater to keep their homes warm during the winter.

Yet it seems to be the approach of Colorado's environmental Left. Part of the problem is progressive leaders' extremely narrow definition of "clean" energy that limits resource choices to more costly and unreliable wind and solar.

In 2004, Colorado voters approved Amendment 37, requiring Xcel Energy and other investor-owned utilities to use preferred sources such as wind and solar for 10 percent of the electricity sold to end users.

Since then the Colorado legislature has mandated increases in the renewable (or preferred) energy standard, from 10 to 20 to the current 30 percent by 2020. Only Maine (40 percent by 2017) and California (33 percent by 2020) have more aggressive mandates. They also have higher electric rates than Colorado.

Last year the state legislature passed SB 252, a 20 percent preferred energy standard on Colorado's rural electric cooperatives. Now nearly the entire state must pay for a significant percentage of electricity produced predominantly from preferred "clean" sources wind and solar.

Since producing electricity from wind and solar is more expensive, Colorado's electric rates have gone up along with the legislature's mandates.

Not too long ago, our state enjoyed some of the cheapest electricity in the United States. In 2000, Colorado's residential rates were 7.31 per kWh, equivalent to 9.89 cents in 2013 dollars. Instead, Coloradans now pay 11.91 cents per kWh for residential electricity, the highest rate in the Mountain West. California, Alaska, and Hawaii are the only Western states with higher residential rates.

Colorado's electric rates are rising significantly faster than in most states. Last year rates across the U.S. increased on average 2.4 percent, compared to a 4.5 percent jump here.

These high rates couldn't come at a worse time. Just this week the *Denver Post* reported that Colorado's labor participation rate has fallen 6 percentage points since 2006, to its lowest level (67.3 percent) since 1976.

In addition, the number of Coloradans obtaining assistance from food stamps continues to mark all-time high numbers, Complete Colorado reports.

The second week of February saw a 42 percent increase in Coloradans asking government for help paying their heating bills, according to *9News*.

The state legislature had an opportunity to modestly improve the situation. Rep. Lori Saine's (R-Weld County) HB 1138 would have expanded the definition of "clean" energy to include hydroelectricity.

Under HB1138 many electric co-ops that serve Colorado's rural communities could have met or at least come close to meeting SB 252's increased mandate. Without the expanded definition, some co-ops will need to build additional capacity and expensive transmission lines, or purchase renewable energy credits from other providers. Some of Colorado's poorest counties will bear the costs.

Despite HB1138's bipartisan sponsorship, lobbying from the wind and solar industries and their advocates in the environmental non-profit world doomed the bill in committee.

Progressive state lawmakers' definition of clean energy is also unique. Many states, including those in the eco-friendly Pacific Northwest, the Center for American Progress, the Environmental Protection Agency, and our own Colorado Energy Office all consider hydro to be a clean, renewable source.

Our state's extremely narrow definition of clean energy begs the question of whether progressive lawmakers simply seek to protect the wind and solar industry at the expense of ratepayers.

A 2012 Independence Institute study showed Xcel Energy ratepayers spent \$343 million to comply with the preferred energy mandate, much of which ended up as surplus because supply exceeded demand. That's \$245 per ratepayer, nearly two months of average Colorado electricity bills, for electricity they didn't use.

Affordable power is not mutually exclusive of clean power. Colorado should expand the definition of clean resources to include clean coal, natural gas, hydroelectric, and nuclear. We also should encourage a least cost principle and let consumers decide.

Anything else is just cruel.

*This [opinion editorial](#) appeared originally in the Greeley Tribune on February 20, 2014.*

Tags: [HB1138](#), [Paul Ehrlich](#), [preferred energy mandate](#), [renewable energy mandate](#), [SB252](#), [Xcel Energy](#)

## **Coloradans can't rely on subsidy-dependent wind energy**

February 17, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [renewable energy](#), [wind energy](#)

*This op-ed first appeared in the Greeley Tribune*



**By Michael Sandoval**

When Coloradans flip on their lights or crank up their heat, they expect their electricity to be affordable, and at the very least, reliable. But the state Legislature and Gov. John Hickenlooper are forcing the opposite on Colorado — expensive and unreliable wind energy.

The wind lobby today is one of the fattest hogs at the corporate welfare trough. Rather than win customers through good prices and reliable products, the wind lobby uses political clout to force consumers to purchase its overpriced services. Currently, a state law requires that 12 percent of the state's electricity be generated by so-called "green" energy. That mandate increases to 20 percent next year, and will jump to 30 percent by 2020 for investor-owned utilities. Senate Bill 252, signed by the governor last year, imposes a 20 percent mandate on rural cooperative electric associations. These jumps will only increase the cost of electricity.

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Op-Ed

The wind industry is "green" in the sense that it lines its pockets with taxpayer subsidies. The federal \$12 billion wind production tax credit was increased to 2.3 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2013. Although Congress decided not to renew this particular form of corporate welfare, the Obama administration has decided to keep the welfare money flowing anyway. The Internal Revenue Service

issued guidance that allowed projects under construction and generating electricity by Jan. 1, 2016, to also claim the tax credit, which lasts for 10 years.

How dependent is the wind industry on government subsidies? American Wind Energy Association CEO Tom Kiernan pointed to the steep declines in wind capacity installations when the production tax credit is allowed to lapse, as it was briefly at the end of 2012. Last year, total available wind energy output decreased 92 percent.

In other words, almost all the wind power construction today exists only because of taxpayer subsidies. Because the wind lobby has become addicted to corporate welfare, the wind welfare companies have failed to make the technological advances, which make wind power competitive in a free market. It's easier to lobby Washington to get money extracted from the taxpayers, and to lobby Denver to force consumers to buy your product.

Besides being expensive, wind power is unreliable, as demonstrated by a near-record demand in Texas for home heating in early January, which put a strain on that state's power grid. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas noted that planned maintenance and unexpected weather-related outages of power plants elsewhere nearly brought on rotating outages.

Proponents declared triumphantly that wind had saved the Texas grid. But in reality, wind had failed.

Put simply, wind energy was unable to fill the gap created by a sudden increase in demand from the cold and the drop in capacity due to the scheduled and unscheduled outages that occurred the morning of Jan. 6. Just as the state experienced a spike in overall energy demand, wind power began to plummet, according to analysis of the council's data by the Independence Institute.

That morning, wind output fell below 20 percent of maximum capacity by 7 a.m., just as the other power plants went offline. As a percentage of council's total output, wind fell to below 10 percent and remained there until 11 p.m.

The Institute for Energy Research confirmed that a mere 3.2 percent of the energy supplied to the Texas grid covered by council came from wind. At the moment Texas residents needed reliable power the most, 83 percent of Texas' wind turbines were unavailable "during peak demand."

The only thing that saved Texas that day was importing nearly 1,000 megawatts from the eastern power grid and Mexico.

The Comanche Peak 1 nuclear plant fell to 72 percent of capacity on Jan 6. Meanwhile, actual wind output in Texas failed to reach 70 percent during any one hour, and remained below 50 percent in at least 20 of the 24 hours that day. So when the winter chill hit Texas residents, wind power nearly left them out in the cold. Coloradans would be wise to not endanger their safety in their homes, and their pocketbooks, by forced reliance on an intermittent, subsidy-dependent power source.

*Michael Sandoval is an energy policy analyst for the [Independence Institute](#), a free market think tank in Denver.*

Tags: [energy grid](#), [ERCOT](#), [Green energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [subsidies](#), [Texas](#), [wind energy](#)

## **Fried Birds: Green Energy Involves Tradeoffs Too**

February 17, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#)

The Ivanpah solar plant went online last week, but the cost to wildlife—particularly birds—won't be known for at least two more years.

Reports that the giant solar thermal array featuring more than 300,000 reflective panels and steam-driven turbine towers have been “killing and singeing” birds by heating the air to around 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit near the towers, [according to reports](#).

You can view pictures of the deceased birds [here](#).

All power sources involve tradeoffs, but to date, wind and solar have generally avoided discussing the topic, often quickly shifting to pointing out the costs of other energy sources in defending their own environmental impacts.

Policy directives aimed to support the technologies often override such environmental concerns, [as they did with Ivanpah](#):

Ivanpah can be seen as a success story and a cautionary tale, highlighting the inevitable trade-offs between the need for cleaner power and the loss of fragile, open land. The California Energy Commission concluded that while the solar plant would impose “significant impacts on the environment ... the benefits the project would provide override those impacts.”

The plant's effects on birds is the subject of a current two-year study.

But the cost of electricity from solar sources is and will remain higher than other natural resources, like coal, for the foreseeable future, [according to the Energy Information Administration](#):

The Energy Information Administration says that it will cost new solar thermal plants 161 percent more to generate one megawatt hour of power than it costs a coal plant to do in 2018 — despite the costs of solar power being driven downward.

On average, conventional coal plants cost \$100 to make one megawatt hour, while solar thermal plants cost \$261 for the same amount of power. This data, however, does not take into account the impact of federal, state or local subsidies and mandates on power costs.

The solar thermal installation built by BrightSource Energy [received at \\$1.6 billion loan guarantee](#) from the Department of Energy in 2011. That loan was secured in no small part due to political connections, [according to The Heritage Foundation](#).

Higher electricity costs as a result of policy directives and crony capitalism, something the [Solar Energy Industries Association was readily willing to admit](#):

Resch said a key issue for the industry will be maintaining government policies that encourage development, including tax credits for solar projects that are set to expire in 2016 and government loan guarantees. “The direct result of these policies is projects like Ivanpah,” he said.

Once again, however, the claim that solar energy is a “free” or “no cost” energy source has been upended. Another BrightSource project [is receiving similar concerns](#):

In response to BrightSource’s blueprint for its second big solar farm in Riverside County, near Joshua Tree National Park, biologists working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service told state regulators that they were concerned that heat produced by the project could kill golden eagles and other protected species.

“We’re trying to figure out how big the problem is and what we can do to minimize bird mortalities,” said Eric Davis, assistant regional director for migratory birds at the federal agency’s Sacramento office. “When you have new technologies, you don’t know what the impacts are going to be.”

Ivanpah may be the first large utility-scale solar thermal installation in California, [and also the last](#):

Though Ivanpah is an engineering marvel, experts doubt more plants like it will be built in California. Other solar technologies are now far cheaper than solar thermal, federal guarantees for renewable energy projects have dried up, and natural gas-fired plants are much cheaper to build.

...

That means the private sector must fill the gap at a time when building a natural-gas fired power plant costs about \$1,000 per megawatt, a fraction of the \$5,500 per megawatt that Ivanpah cost.

“Our job was to kickstart the demonstration of these different technologies,” Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said in an interview high up on one of the plant’s three towers.

The plant is projected to produce approximately 380 megawatts “during the peak hours of the day,” [according to BrightSource](#).

A technology that costs 5.5 times more to build and that delivers electricity that is 161 percent more expensive than coal, and that secures it’s funding through political connections is not the job of the Department of Energy—or taxpayers’ dollars—nor to “kickstart the demonstration of these different technologies.”

Not when it produces just 0.24 percent of the electricity in the United States in November 2013, [according to the EIA](#).

Tags: [birds](#), [BrightSource Energy](#), [California](#), [coal](#), [Department of Energy](#), [Department of Energy loan guarantee program](#), [electricity ra](#), [environment](#), [Ernest Moniz](#), [Ivanpah](#), [natural gas](#), [renewable energy](#), [solar energy](#)

## **January 23 Energy Roundup: Fracking Dishonesty; Interior Sec. Jewell Boots Press**

January 23, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Archive](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [renewable energy](#)

Periodically, the Independence Institute’s Energy Policy Center will take a look at the good, the bad, and the ugly in energy stories from around the United States and abroad, and bring the best (and worst) of those stories to your attention.

1. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell [may have violated Colorado Open Meetings Law](#) under its sunshine statutes by shutting out members of the press while visiting Moffat County on Tuesday. The meeting in Colorado centered on the [status of the sage-grouse](#), a species whose designation could affect energy projects in the northwest portion of the state:

As she was leaving, Leavitt Riley said she saw Jewell in a car in the parking lot and the driver-side door was open, so she approached Jewell “and she said the press was not allowed at this meeting,” Leavitt Riley recalled.

“I said, do you realize more than a dozen elected officials were in it? She said the tour was open to the press but this was a closed meeting” and then drove away, Leavitt Riley said.

She said the newspaper is pursuing the matter with the Colorado Press Association. No one with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s office was available for comment Tuesday night.

2. From Lachlan Markay at the [Washington Free Beacon](#)—a *Politico* column riddled with inaccuracies from anti-fracking activists:

A pair of prominent environmentalists penned a column Tuesday for *Politico Magazine* attacking hydraulic fracturing littered with dishonest and incorrect claims.

...

“If you calculate the greenhouse gas pollution emitted at every stage of the production process—drilling, piping, compression—it’s essentially just coal by another name,” McKibben and Tidwell wrote.

The claim is frequently sourced to Cornell scientists Robert Howarth and Anthony Ingraffea, who have found significantly higher life cycle emissions than are found in other studies.

Numerous government agencies, environmentalist groups, and academics have panned Howarth and Ingraffea’s work on the issue and produced their own studies showing relatively low life cycle emissions from natural gas.

“Their analysis is seriously flawed,” according to three Cornell colleagues, professors in the university’s departments of earth and atmospheric sciences and chemical and biological engineering.

3. Michael Bastasch at *The Daily Caller* [highlights a report on the social benefits of fossil fuels](#):

Burning off carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to provide cheap electricity may have affected the climate, but the benefits of a carbonized economy far outweigh the costs, according to a new study.

The pro-coal American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) released a study showing that the benefits of carbonized fuel, like coal, to society are 50 to 500 times greater than the costs. Over the past two-and-a-half centuries increased fossil fuel energy production has helped more than double global life expectancy and increase global incomes 11-fold.

4. [North Carolina State University issued a study](#) finding that increasing the use of electric vehicles “is not an effective way to produce large emissions reductions”:

“We wanted to see how important EDVs may be over the next 40 years in terms of their ability to reduce emissions,” says Dr. Joseph DeCarolis, an assistant professor of civil, construction and environmental engineering at NC State and senior author of a paper on the new model. “We found that increasing the use of EDVs is not an effective way to produce large emissions reductions.”

The researchers ran 108 different scenarios in a powerful energy systems model to determine the impact of EDV use on emissions between now and 2050. They found that, even if EDVs made up 42 percent of passenger vehicles in the U.S., there would be little or no reduction in the emission of key air pollutants.

Tags: [carbon emissions](#), [Electric vehicles](#), [fossil fuels](#), [fracking](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [Moffat County](#), [natural gas](#), [sage grouse](#), [Sally Jewell](#), [social cost of carbon](#), [wind energy](#)

## **Emails Show EPA's Denver "Listening Tour" Stop A Collaboration Between Agency, Environmentalist Orgs**

January 15, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Archive](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Emails published this week by the Washington [Free Beacon's Lachlan Markay](#) illustrate a pattern of coordination and cooperation between the Environmental Protection Agency and external environmentalist groups, including the use of at least one agency event to "pressure" an Xcel Energy executive at the Denver stop of a 2013 "listening tour":

The emails, obtained by the Energy and Environment Legal Institute (EELI) through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, could fuel an ongoing controversy over EPA policies that critics say are biased against traditional sources of energy.

Emails show EPA used official events to help environmentalist groups gather signatures for petitions on agency rulemaking, incorporated advance copies of letters drafted by those groups into official statements, and worked with environmentalists to publicly pressure executives of at least one energy company.

In October, the EPA launched an 11-city "listening tour" to gather commentary and input on carbon pollution regulations, and scheduled a stop in Denver. While Colorado houses the EPA Region 8 office, [critics then questioned](#) why the tour skipped states like West Virginia, Kentucky, and Colorado's neighbor to the north, Wyoming—all states that produce more coal, with Wyoming the number one coal producing state in the country.

The documents shed light on part of the deliberation process, with Markay revealing how the "EPA decided on the locations for those hearings after consulting with leading environmentalist groups."

According to emails written by EPA Region 8 administrator James Martin, the selection of "listening tour" stops had more to do with applying pressure to a related industry—natural gas—

and singled out one industry executive in particular, while bypassing “friendlier forums” in California and Washington.

“San Fran and Seattle would be friendlier forums but CA has no coal plants and WA is phasing out its one plant,” Martin wrote. The recipient was Vicki Patton, general counsel at the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

“Choosing either may create opportunities for the industry to claim EPA is tilting the playing field,” Martin told Patton. “Denver would not have that problem.”

Martin continued on the choice of Denver. “The gas industry has way more presence here, too. One last point in its favor—it will make Roy Palmer nervous!” wrote Martin.

As Markay points out, Palmer is an executive at Xcel Energy, the state’s largest utility.

Markay also noted that Martin used a personal email address for official EPA business, a claim the EPA had first denied but that the released documents later substantiated.

Among other findings revealed by the internal emails, demonstrating a pattern of cooperation:

Nancy Grantham, director of public affairs for EPA Region 1, which covers New England, asked an organizer for the Sierra Club’s New Hampshire chapter to share the group’s agenda so EPA could adjust its messaging accordingly in an email dated March 12, 2012.

Tags: [coal](#), [Energy and Environment Legal Institute](#), [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Freedom of Information Act](#), [James Martin](#), [listening tour](#), [natural gas](#), [Region 8](#), [Sierra Club](#), [Washington Free Beacon](#)

## **No, Wind Turbines Didn’t Keep Texas Grid Online**

January 9, 2014 by [michael](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Archive](#), [renewable energy](#), [wind energy](#)

Wind energy kept Texas powered earlier this week, [according to supporters](#) of the renewable energy power source.

Plunging temperatures as a result of the polar vortex pushed energy generation across the country above normal winter levels, [including Texas](#):

ERCOT said demand for electricity today reached 55,486 megawatts between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. That’s short of the record winter demand of 57,265 on Feb. 10, 2011, which produced rotating

outages, and lower than peak demand during last month's run of low temperatures, said ERCOT spokeswoman Robbie Searcy.

The demand for electricity in Texas nearly pushed the grid to begin triggering rolling power outages:

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), which manages the electric grid in most of Texas, briefly issued an Energy Emergency Alert 2 early Monday morning, the last step before rotating power outages would be implemented. ERCOT canceled the warning about possible outages shortly after 9:30 a.m.

But the loss of just one more large power plant could have pushed the grid over the edge, Dan Woodfin, ERCOT director of system operations, told reporters on a conference call. The grid lost two big power plants to weather-related problems and some others to other problems, totaling about 3,700 megawatts of power, Woodfin said.

Texas made up the deficit between demand and supply by tapping energy sources outside the state:

During that time, the state imported about 800 megawatts from the nation's eastern power grid, and another 180 megawatts from Mexico. A megawatt is roughly enough to supply about 200 Texas homes during a period of peak electricity use, although demand in Texas peaks during the summer as air conditioners fire up.

For about an hour during the emergency alert period, wholesale power prices hit the state's regulatory ceiling of \$5,000 per megawatt-hour, Woodfin said. That's about 100 times the \$50 per megawatt-hour price generally seen.

Why did Texas need to seek out of state electricity when, as was trumpeted by wind energy supporters, wind was filling in?

Wind could not fill the gap created by increased demand from the cold and the drop in capacity due to outages from plants—both scheduled and unscheduled.

The Energy Reliability Council of Texas monitors the production of wind energy in the Texas grid and produces daily [“wind integration reports” \(WIR\)](#) that carefully illustrate:

Hourly averages of actual ERCOT load vs. wind output, and total installed wind capacity

Actual average wind output as a percentage of the total installed wind capacity

Actual average wind output as a percentage of the ERCOT load

Weekly graph of the ERCOT load vs. actual wind output

The first graph from the January 6 WIR shows that at the very moment energy demand in Texas began to increase in the early morning hours Monday, actual wind output began to plummet precipitously.

Wind production falls well below 2,000 MW and remains there for most of the rest of the daylight hours on Monday, picking up again only as night returns:

In the next graph, ERCOT's detailed hourly picture shows wind output falling below 20 percent of installed capacity by 7am, [the same hour as power plants totaling 1,350 MW went offline](#).

Actual wind output as a percentage of ERCOT's total load declined from approximately 15 percent at midnight to around just 5 percent by 7am, as the peak of the surge of demand was felt, and remained below the 10 percent threshold until after 11pm Monday.

So, instead of bailing out the Texas grid, the intermittent source was reduced to a trickle on a near-record setting day for the state of Texas.

The Institute for Energy Research [found the same results](#):

But even though early morning is generally a good time for wind generation, on Monday morning only 17 percent of ERCOT's wind capacity (1,782 megawatts of the approximately 10,400 megawatts of wind capacity) were operating at that time. According to Fuel Fix, this means that "on Monday [wind] only contributed about 3.2 percent of electricity used during peak demand. It is obviously a judgment call whether 17 percent of capacity and 3.2 percent of total generation is indeed "massive quantities" of wind or merely middling amounts.

Winter energy demand is lower than summer peak demand—when Texans reasonably clamor for air conditioning—and more than 10,000 MW of generation for the state's grid was [offline Monday for routine, scheduled maintenance](#):

Electric supplies on Monday tightened after more than 3,700 megawatts of generation was forced to shut overnight Sunday and early Monday, Dan Woodfin, ERCOT's director of system operations, told reporters. The forced outages came on top of nearly 10,000 MW of generation that was already shut for the season or for planned maintenance, he said.

Woodfin said about 1,800 MW of the 3,700 MW of the forced outages were weather-related, including two large power plants in north central Texas that he declined to name.

The [American Wind Energy Association](#) was quick to tout wind's contributions:

Then in Texas, the more than 2,000 MW of wind output on Monday morning was the critical difference keeping heaters running as the grid operator struggled with numerous outages at conventional power plants. More than 13,000 MW of conventional power plants were down for maintenance, while another 2,000 MW of conventional power plants experienced unplanned outages, forcing the grid operator to resort to emergency procedures. In a similar incident two years ago, wind energy earned accolades from the grid operator for helping to keep the lights on as dozens of conventional power plants failed in another cold snap.

Other outlets like ThinkProgress, also pushed wind's contributions.

“Demand remained high on Tuesday, but increased output from West Texas wind farms enabled the state to avoid an emergency scenario,” said ClimateProgress, TP’s climate blog.

Even Al Armendariz, the former Environmental Protection Agency regional director whose [promises to “crucify” oil and gas producers](#) resulted in his abrupt resignation, joined in congratulating wind:

Calling coal, gas, and nuclear “unreliable” Armendariz dinged the “old stuff” of traditional power generation—the [Luminant Comanche Peak 1 nuclear was at 72 percent of capacity](#), according to Reuters, both Monday and Tuesday—while neglecting to mention that all day Monday, actual wind output for ERCOT as a percentage of total wind capacity never even managed to reach 70 percent during any one hour, and fell short of 50 percent in at least 20 of the 24 hours that day, according to ERCOT’s reports.

Armendariz currently works for the [Sierra Club’s “Beyond Coal” campaign](#).

Tags: [Al Armendariz](#), [ERCOT](#), [polar vortex](#), [Texas](#), [wind energy](#), [wind turbines](#)

## **[Progressive criticism of PUC nominee Vaad is about ALEC rather than energy](#)**

January 8, 2014 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Archive](#), [HB 1365](#), [New Energy Economy](#)

*Progressive left logic: [Progressives want to destroy ALEC](#). Moderate Republican PUC nominee [Glenn Vaad](#) has been a member of ALEC. Therefore progressives want to destroy Glenn Vaad even though he has supported increasing Colorado’s renewable energy mandate and fuel switching.*

The progressive left’s criticism of Governor John Hickenlooper’s appointment of former State Representative Glenn Vaad (R-Mead) to Colorado’s Public Utilities Commission (PUC) appears to part of a coordinated national campaign against the [American Legislative Exchange Council](#) rather than Vaad’s record on energy policy, which is more in line with Democrats than free market conservatives. Vaad is awaiting State Senate confirmation, which is likely to happen sometime this week.

ALEC is a nonpartisan voluntary membership organization for conservative state lawmakers “who share a common belief in limited government, free markets, federalism, and individual liberty.” ALEC promotes such dangerous ideas like reducing excessive government spending, limiting the overall tax burden, choice in education, and market-based approach to renewable energy sources. As a state lawmaker, Glenn Vaad was a member.

The progressive left is obsessed with ALEC. In May 2013 several progressive organizations with ties to Colorado met to “coordinate their attack plan” as [the Washington Free Beacon reported](#):

Leading progressive organizers met on May 10 to coordinate their attack plan against the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), discussing ways to pressure corporations into abandoning the group for its small-government advocacy and turn against what they call the “vast, right-wing conspiracy.”

The participants, including representatives from such far-left groups as Common Cause, Color of Change, and ProgressNow, met for lunch in a conference room at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The *Free Beacon* quoted Aniello Alioto of ProgressNow Colorado, summing up the strategy on attacking ALEC, “Never relent, never let up pressure, and always increase.”

By law, the three-member PUC cannot have more than two members from any one party. With Republican member James Tarpey retiring and the other two members Pam Patton and Chairman Joshua Epel being Democrats, that means the Governor had to find a qualified applicant within the Republican Party. In theory, he could have looked for someone inside the Constitution, Libertarian, or Green Parties, but it’s likely that the qualified applicant pool was rather shallow.

So Governor Hickenlooper selected a very moderate Republican Rep. Vaad, who has the necessary qualifications as a former Weld County Commissioner and longtime employee of the Colorado Department of Transportation. Vaad’s 2011 Colorado Union of Taxpayers’ rating (a [conservative legislative scorecard](#)) was a modest 50 out of 100. Only nine House Republicans scored lower.

When it comes to energy policy, the environmental left should be pleased with Vaad’s nomination. As a state representative, Vaad co-sponsored HB07-1281, the bill to increase Colorado’s renewable mandate to 20 percent. He also sponsored then Governor Bill Ritter’s crowning jewel of his “new energy economy,” the controversial fuel-switching bill HB10-1365, which got nearly unanimous approval from the Democrat caucus but proved quite divisive for Republicans.

But Vaad’s actual legislative record doesn’t seem to matter. To the progressive left, his appointment is more about ALEC than Colorado’s PUC as [the far-left Colorado Independent reports](#):

Groups opposed to Vaad’s appointment say he has not just been an ALEC member but an officer. They point to documents and reports posted by consumer-advocacy groups like Common Cause and progressive-politics organizations like the Center for Media and Democracy that show Vaad was Chair of the ALEC Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development task force while he was serving in the state legislature in 2011 and 2012 and that he had been accepting ALEC “scholarships” every year he was in the legislature dating back to 2006.

According to a press release from Gabe Elsner, executive director at the Energy and Policy Institute, quoted in the *Independent*:

There is a clear conflict of interest... In the past year, ALEC's utility and fossil fuel members lobbied lawmakers in at least 15 states to introduce legislation repealing Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards. Now ALEC is launching a new wave of attacks on clean energy policies like solar net metering... There's a real threat that Mr. Vaad will serve ALEC's special interest members instead of Colorado families.

Well first, Rep. Vaad hasn't been in the state legislature since the spring of 2012, and Mr. Elsner is talking about 2013. Also, there is no evidence that Vaad ever introduced legislation to repeal the renewable energy mandate. In fact, as stated earlier, he did just the opposite. (Although he did oppose HB10-1001, the 30 percent renewable mandate bill). Furthermore, he was on the Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development task force not the Energy, Environment and Agriculture.

Progressive left logic: [Progressives want to destroy ALEC](#). Moderate Republican PUC nominee [Glenn Vaad](#) has been a member of ALEC. Therefore progressives want to destroy Glenn Vaad even though he has supported increasing Colorado's renewable energy mandate and fuel switching.

The bottom line is that the opposition to Glenn Vaad is about attacking ALEC rather than Vaad's qualifications or his perspective on energy policy. So the progressive left is willing to sacrifice about the best appointee they can hope for in order to "never let up the pressure, and always increase."

*I did call Glenn Vaad for comment but as of posting he has not returned the call.*

Tags: [ALEC](#), [American Legislation Exchange Council](#), [Bill Ritter](#), [Colorado Independent](#), [Glenn Vaad](#), [HB 1365](#), [John Hickenlooper](#), [ProgressNow Colorado](#), [PUC](#), [renewable energy](#), [renewable energy mandate](#), [Washington Free Beacon](#)

Obama regime suggests Buying Permits to Kill Eagles

## **'Devastating': Despite Majority Support, 'Fractivists' Plan Statewide Fracking Ban; MoveOn Joins Effort**

November 20, 2013 by [michael](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Hydraulic Fracturing](#), [Legislation](#)

DENVER—Calls for a statewide ban on hydraulic fracturing in Colorado have escalated following the passage of a handful of local moratoria, even as a majority of Colorado voters continue to support the drilling method.

A [Quinnipiac poll](#) from November 19 conducted just two weeks after voters in Boulder, Lafayette, and Fort Collins—and possibly Broomfield—voted for moratoria in their municipalities, 51 percent of Coloradans surveyed support the use of fracking as an extraction method, versus 34 percent who were opposed.

A combined 56 percent of all surveyed viewed fracking as “very” or “somewhat” safe, including Republicans and independents.

The impact of a total ban on fracking would be tremendous, as a report from the Business Research Division of the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado at Boulder concluded in July 2013.

More than 111,000 jobs were created, generating \$3.8 billion in wages, or 2.8% of Colorado earnings. The average direct jobs—over 51,000 in all—received \$101,171 in wages in 2012, more than double Colorado’s average wage (\$50,339), [the report said](#).

In addition to the impact on Colorado’s economy, the report’s authors also demonstrated the enormous contribution of the oil and gas industry to state and local government. Nearly \$1.6 billion in severance, property, ad valorem, royalty, income, and sales taxes were paid to the state in 2012, including \$600 million in property taxes alone.

According to [CBS4Denver’s Shaun Boyd](#), approximately \$500 million of those taxes go to Colorado schools. Those funds would be in jeopardy if voters or the state legislature enacted a statewide fracking ban.

Mike King, executive director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, told the *National Journal Daily* the consequences of such a ban would be dire.

“A statewide ban would be devastating for the state’s economy. If we were to lose the oil and gas jobs that we have, it would be just catastrophic for our economy.... The idea of a statewide ban on fracking—that is such a draconian response, because there are a lot of areas, the vast majority of areas, where oil and gas development is taking place across the state that people are pretty happy with it,” King told *NJD*.

The goal of a statewide ban was thrust out of the shadows by Tuesday’s unveiling of a new ad from Americans Against Fracking, featuring what the [Denver Post](#) called “B and C-list celebrities” demanding Gov. John Hickenlooper act to ban fracking.

Among the groups backing the video are the Environment Media Association, Environment America, Food and Water Watch, Frack Free Colorado, Alliance for Sustainable Colorado, and New Yorkers Against Fracking.

The national effort follows on the heels of [Frack Free Colorado's site-scrubbing](#) of ties to another national organization, Water Defense.

But plans for a fracking ban were hushed during and shortly after the conclusion of the campaign for the local moratoria, as indicated by statements made by Food and Water Watch's Sam Schabacker following the November 5 election.

In an [interview with KUNC](#), Schabacker said the election results left "all options" on the table in Colorado. But his [celebratory press release](#) on November 6 did not mention plans for a statewide ban, even as the [national website of FWW calls for a ban in Colorado](#), and even a [national ban](#).

The group's calls for banning go beyond other calls by environmental groups for regulations on fracking, "to make it safer, more transparent and cleaner."

Proposed emission regulations, such as the one made earlier this week, are not enough for Schabacker, in an [interview New York Times columnist Joe Nocera](#).

Nocera asked Schabacker about the rules Hickenlooper announced on Monday. Schabacker rejected the decision made by groups like the Environmental Defense Fund to push for regulation rather than a complete ban. Schabacker told Nocera that EDF efforts were a "smoke screen" giving the oil and gas industry "a veneer of respectability."

"We believe that fracking is inherently unsafe and should be banned," Schabacker said.

But Schabacker admitted that the tactic of underplaying the desire for a statewide ban in favor of short-term efforts like the municipal moratoria gives groups like FWW the opportunity to push against fracking—and chew into the support indicated by the Quinnipiac poll.

As the [National Journal reported](#), "Schabacker's group is willing to accept temporary moratoriums so communities can spend time learning about the potential impacts—and so national organizers can drive more opposition to fossil-fuel development outright."

Not just a ban on fracking, but the end of the entire oil and gas industry.

"Shane Davis, a self-described 'fractivist' whose full-time job is to mobilize people against fracking—and oil and gas drilling writ large—focuses mainly on the public-health and environmental concerns. Ultimately, though, he is fighting to end fossil-fuel production altogether," according to the *National Journal*.

"Fractivism around hydraulic fracturing is so critical, and it's moving at a really fast pace," Davis told *NJ*. He pointed to climate change, declaring it a "climate crisis."

National organizations such as MoveOn have recently announced support for "fractivists" with their [#FrackingFighters campaign](#). Applicants are eligible for \$500 in grants, materials, and training to oppose fracking. MoveOn's efforts target individual activists and small groups with an annual budget of no more than \$50,000. It was unclear how many grants would be issued.

“#FrackingFighters is a project of MoveOn.org Civic Action to support and develop the leadership and capacity of grassroots individuals and organizations to win victories that protect our communities, our water, our air, and our climate from the destruction caused by hydraulic fracturing—also known as fracking—and the entire fracking lifecycle,” MoveOn wrote.

Tags:

## [Pandora's Promise: if you care about kids, go nuclear](#)

November 8, 2013 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Archive](#)

By Dr. Robert Applegate

The opening scene of the documentary [Pandora's Promise](#) brings viewers face-to-face with nuclear power plant protestors screaming scary things like “the nuclear industry is a death industry.” Then it moves to a nuclear energy supporter walking around the destroyed nuclear power plant in Fukushima with the filmmaker Robert Stone asking are you still “pro-nuclear?”

At this point I was unsure where this film would take me. If this was a movie *really* about how nuclear power is clean and safe and our only option to combat climate change, or was this more of a movie trying to balance opinions rather than present fact. When the movie did jump into the facts of nuclear power, it did not disappoint. Explaining, for example, that one pound of nuclear fuel (about the size of your finger) holds the same amount of energy as 5000 barrels of oil.

The movie provides an overview of the origins of the hysteria over nuclear energy. It exposes the baby boomers who came of age during the height of the Cold War with elementary school duck-and-cover drills just in case the Soviets dropped *the* bomb. As a result, an entire generation, arguably the most influential generation, associated the word “nuclear” with bombs and destruction. Add this irrational fear to the lack of understanding of how and where electricity comes from, and the nuclear power industry was set up for failure by the 1980's.

*Pandora's Promise* does a decent job of talking about how the accessibility of energy is directly correlated to quality of life. People live longer and better lives when they can access power easily and inexpensively. Stone should have made this a bit stronger, especially since the movie is directed at environmentalists and why they need to reexamine nuclear power as an option to improving the quality of life in the developing world. The two billion people globally without electricity don't just need a clean environment; they need access to clean, reliable, and affordable power.

My favorite part came when Stone tours the globe with a dosimeter (a radiation-meter), showing people what physicists know; radiation exists naturally everywhere and in everything, and our

bodies deal with it every day with no increased cancer risk. What's funny, and trust me the irony is not lost on physicists like me, Stone even shows a group of protesters having a "banana break" in which one is handing out bananas to eat while they are screaming about the horrors of radiation. Many people, except misguided protestors, know that a Geiger Counter (a machine that measures radiation) next to a banana is quite noisy because bananas have a lot of naturally occurring radiation.

Contrary to popular myth, deaths from nuclear power are incredibly low. No one in the U.S. has died from a nuclear power related accident, including any radiation leaks, and this is pointed out in the film. Roughly 50 people did die at Chernobyl as a result of the accident there, but that isn't even close to the nonsensical "millions" number that one protester cites. The film crew braved Chernobyl revealing how the plant kept working nearly 10 years after the accident and how people went to work every day there with no increased cancer risk.

Stone also addresses the difficult topic of nuclear waste with a straightforward quote from an environmentalist who flat out says, "Nuclear waste is not an environmental issue" because there is simply very little of it.

The movie has an optimistic ending, talking about the future and how the newer reactor designs are incapable of melting down. Peaceful nuclear power is helping to reduce the number of nuclear warheads through recycling – 16,000 in the past 10 years recycled and now used to power cities. Bottom line: don't fear nuclear power. We need it to combat carbon emissions and raise two billion people out of poverty.

I know this is tough for old-school environmentalists but *Pandora's Promise* tried to be gentle with this message to the eco-left: your heart is in the right place, but your facts are wrong. Please reexamine your point of view, and you will change your mind. Do it for the sake of the kids you are trying to save.

To hear more about my take on *Pandora's Promise*, listen to my review on the [Amy Oliver Show on News Talk 1310 KFKA](#).

Now, go hug a nuclear power plant operator.

*Dr. Robert Applegate has a PhD in Applied Physics from the Colorado School of Mines, has worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and is an advocate for science in public policy.*

Tags: [Chernobyl](#), [environmental movement](#), [Fukushima](#), [nuclear power](#), [Pandora's Promise](#)

**[Think of economic impact before banning fracking](#)**

August 28, 2013 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Hydraulic Fracturing](#)

By Brandon Ratterman

Around the nation, self-described environmentalists have made hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and their perceived negative impact on the environment growing points of contention. In Colorado this debate led to several community-based moratoriums and talks of a statewide ban on fracking. But if a few organized, anti-fracking organizations realistically want to shut down an entire industry, they need to acknowledge the economic effects of those actions. Luckily, the University of Colorado (Boulder) recently published the [economic and fiscal benefits of Colorado's O&G industry](#), which is summarized in the paragraphs below.

In 2012, the O&G industry contributed a total of \$29.6 billion to Colorado's economy in direct and indirect activities. Of the total, \$9.3 billion is directly related to oil and gas production, which requires the most efficient extraction technology (hydraulic fracturing) to be competitive.

The value added from the O&G industry supports 111,500 Colorado jobs. Of those jobs, the 29,000 employees that are directly involved in drilling, extraction and support jobs earned over twice as much as the average Colorado employee. In total, the O&G industry paid almost \$6.5 billion in wages to Coloradans in 2012.

The oil and gas industry also provided benefits to those outside of the industry through state and local funding. In 2012, Colorado state and local governments, school districts, and special interests received a total of \$1.6 billion in revenues from the O&G industry. Of that \$1.6 billion, O&G severance tax—which is a fee for extracting a non-renewable resource—contributed \$163 million alone.

The economic and fiscal benefits from the oil and gas industry need to be remembered as statewide actions are considered. If the plan to ban fracking across Colorado is implemented, tens of thousands of Coloradans will be without a job. Likewise, the Colorado economy will be without tens of billions of dollars in revenue, of which over one billion will be cut in state and local government(s), schools and special interests. With effects of this magnitude, it would be advisable for Coloradans to disregard documentaries in this matter and independently research [the environmental effects of “fracking.”](#)

*Brandon Ratterman is a research associate with the Energy Policy Center.*

Tags: [fracking](#), [hydraulic fracturing](#)

# Think of economic impact before banning fracking

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*Brandon Ratterman is a research associate with the Energy Policy Center.*

Tags: [fracking](#), [hydraulic fracturing](#)

# Want open space? Don't go wind or solar!

August 2, 2013 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Archive](#), [New Energy Economy](#), [renewable energy](#)

By Robert Applegate

Amid the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) latest report<sup>1</sup> on the land requirements of solar power generation, others are taking a look at what is really required to power homes using solar and wind and comparing that to another carbon free source, nuclear power generation.

A nuclear power plant, the biggest reactors currently available would take up less than 2 square miles and produce 3200MW of power.<sup>2</sup> To achieve this same power output from solar would require 292 square miles, 146 times the amount of land required for a nuclear plant.<sup>2</sup> A wind farm would need to be 832 square miles, or 416 times the land to create the same amount of power of the nuclear plant.<sup>2</sup> To put this into perspective, the land footprints are shown over the backdrop of the state of Rhode Island, where the blue is a nuclear plant, the yellow a solar farm, and the green a wind farm all of equal capacity.

Land footprints of a nuclear plant (blue), solar array (yellow), and a wind farm (green) all of equal capacity (3200MW), over the backdrop of the state of Rhode Island.<sup>2</sup>

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1 NREL Report Firms Up Land-Use Requirements of Solar. Study shows solar for 1,000 homes would require 32 acres. July 30, 2013. <http://www.nrel.gov/news/press/2013/2269.html>

2 What Does Renewable Energy Look Like? Clean Energy Insight, 10 Apr, 2010. <http://www.cleanenergyinsight.org/energy-insights/what-does-renewable-energy-look-like/>



Tags: [New Energy Economy](#), [NREL](#), [nuclear energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [solar panels](#), [solar power](#), [wind](#), [wind energy](#), [wind power](#)

## Joe America Show on Fracking, Energy, and Environmentalism

June 4, 2013 by [schafer](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Archive](#)

I was on the Joe America radio show this past Saturday. Check it out when you get a chance. We had an interesting discussion about fracking, energy, and environmentalism. It was great! The link to the June 1 recording is on the bottom of the radio show's webpage:  
<http://milehiradio.com/shows.cfm?id=653B6855-E65F-3BF8-F158C4EB3785EEC7>

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Or you can find a direct link to the recording here:

[http://milehiradio.com/archives/653B6855-E65F-3BF8-F158C4EB3785EEC7\\_20130601.mp3](http://milehiradio.com/archives/653B6855-E65F-3BF8-F158C4EB3785EEC7_20130601.mp3)

-Don

Tags:

## [Gasland Part II](#)

May 23, 2013 by [schafer](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Archive](#), [Hydraulic Fracturing](#)

The audience at the "Gasland Part II" screening in Boulder standing with director Josh Fox, fists in the air.

Fracking has been an incredible boon for everyone in the United States. For the first time in decades, heavy manufacturing companies, such as Nucor Steel, are coming back to the United States to take advantage of low energy costs. The rest of the world stands to benefit from fracking, too. Fracking has the potential to free eastern Europe from its dependence on Russia's gas supply, and the political bullying that comes with it. Japan and China can lower their natural gas costs, which are currently four times what we pay in the United States. In Africa, where poverty and disease go hand in hand, cheap energy can help to fuel and build the water purification and modern sanitation systems we enjoy in the developed world.

What makes people like Josh Fox—the director of “Gasland”—so scary, is that they have found a way to fight this amazing, life-promoting technology while evading honest discussion. They have developed and mastered the art of making terrifying “documentaries” using film techniques straight out of Hollywood horror films. Let me explain.

Last night I saw the sixth-ever showing of Fox's newest film, "Gasland Part II." The sequel did not disappoint. Just like the first film, the sequel showed Fox's mastery of the techniques used by modern low-budget horror films. Borrowing a technique from the famous zombie apocalypse thriller "28 Days Later," "Gasland Part II" begins with a rapid succession of choppy, blurred TV clips, over a crescendo of deep base tones resembling an ever-accelerating heartbeat. Then, the moment the audio and visuals hits their climax and the audience could not possibly take anymore, there is a sudden, abrupt and eerie silence. This leaves the audience in temporary state of extreme psychological discomfort, like the feeling of someone groping around in a pitch-black unfamiliar room. Now they are ready for Josh Fox to show them the light.

These techniques are not limited to the beginning of the film; Fox uses them throughout. Later, while showing flames coming off the top of a water well, a deep rumbling base sound swept through the room like what you would hear while watching a space shuttle launch in an IMAX theater. It was a loud, deep rumble, making it feel like the whole room was shaking. Of course, the real sound of the flame had been dubbed over using film editing software, which just shows another way in which Fox effectively uses his "artistic license" to shade the truth.

Another technique that caught my attention was the way Fox juxtaposed images of children with images of heavy machinery, making it seem as though we have to make an either-or choice between children and industry. This was straight out of the Hollywood blockbuster "Terminator II," where images of children's playgrounds and the sound of children laughing are contrasted with those of an industrial wasteland future dominated by killer robots. Truthfully, Fox does not go to *this* extreme—that would be too obvious—but the sheer amount of footage showing children walking up to well sites and posing before bulldozers would be inexplicable if it were not meant to give a similar impression: "Machines or children? Which side are you on?" (There was even a unexplained clip showing a three-legged dog. How can you not feel sympathetic toward a three-legged dog? But how many audience members will stop to wonder what that has to do with fracking?)

What astounded me most was not the techniques themselves but seeing their effect on the audience. At one point the audience was so worked into a fervor that there was a sudden outburst of boos and yelling triggered by a clip of Obama announcing an "all of the above" energy strategy. For the first time in my life, I actually heard someone (sitting somewhere to my left) let out an angry hiss. When I first read George Orwell's book, "1984," I remember thinking, in response to a scene where fictional characters hiss out at images of a character Emmanuel Goldstein, "the Enemy of the People," that it sounded absurd. "Hissing?," I thought, "Who hisses? That's weird." But apparently some people do, and I've just been watching the wrong films with the wrong crowds.

Honestly, I don't know what to do about these kinds of films or how to protect audience members from the kinds of psychological manipulation they employ. In this case, I stood up during the Q&A and urged people to watch "FrackNation," a more honest pro-fracking documentary, but I'm not sure that alone was enough. Maybe I'll have an actual horror film director take a look at Fox's methods to verify and make clear that this is what he is doing. If anyone has some better ideas, please feel free to share.

Frack On!

Tags: [fracking](#), [gasland](#), [gasland 2](#)

## **No love for reality of "renewable" energy in North Carolina**

May 7, 2013 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off  
Filed under: [Legislation](#), [New Energy Economy](#), [renewable energy](#)

A [newly released survey](#) provides some powerful ammunition for North Carolina lawmakers who want to freeze the state's renewable energy mandate at its current level rather than continue its increase to meet the 12.5 percent mandate by 2021.

The Raleigh, North Carolina, based [Civitas Institute](#) conducted the state-wide poll and found that while residents like renewable energy in theory they don't like it in practice, in law, or in cost:

North Carolinians oppose the state law requiring utility companies to purchase a percentage of their energy from so-called renewable energy sources by more than 3-to-1.... Additionally, ratepayers strongly oppose the use of such energy sources as wind or solar if it means paying higher utility bills.

Break downs for responses to two specific questions listed below:

Do you support or oppose the increased usage of renewable sources to generate electricity?

70% Total Support  
15% Total Oppose

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42% Strongly Support  
28% Somewhat Support  
6% Somewhat Oppose  
9% Strongly Oppose  
15% Undecided/Don't Know  
1% Refused

Do you support or oppose the existing state law that requires you to purchase a certain amount of renewable energy each month, even if it costs you more?

21% Total Support  
67% Total Oppose

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10% Strongly Support  
11% Somewhat Support  
18% Somewhat Oppose  
49% Strongly Oppose  
12% Undecided/Don't Know

Another interesting result is the response to who should pay for the additional cost for electricity produced from sources such as wind and solar. Fifty-eight percent said shareholders of investor owned utilities should shoulder the financial burden. My guess is if shareholders rather than ratepayers had to pay for the cost of wind and solar, the enthusiasm for “green” would diminish substantially.

Earlier in the year, “legislation to freeze the state’s renewable energy mandate stalled in a House Committee, but a similar bill is currently moving through the Senate. “ This poll reveals the bill would be extremely well received by ratepayers.

Tags: [Civitas Institute](#), [North Carolina](#), [renewable energy mandate](#)

## [The Great Solar Rip-Off: By the Numbers](#)

April 23, 2013 by [williamyeatman](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Archive](#)

According to Xcel Energy’s regulatory filings, the utility spent **\$275 million** in ratepayer subsidies for customer-sited solar panel systems from 2008-2012.\*

That breaks down to:

- **\$196**  
Cost of these solar subsidies for each of Xcel Energy’s 1.4 million Colorado customers.
- **.7%**  
Percentage of Xcel Energy customers (approximately 9,200) that benefit from lower electricity rates by having subsidized solar panels installed on their property. Although only a fraction of 1 percent of Xcel Energy customers benefit from solar subsidies, 100% of customers pay for the cost of these subsidies.
- **\$76,388**  
Cost in Xcel Energy ratepayer subsidies for each of the 3,600 employees that work “throughout the value chain” of Colorado’s solar industry (job numbers are from the [Solar Energy Industries Association](#)).
- **\$6,100**  
Capital cost per kilowatt capacity of the solar panels subsidized by Xcel Energy ratepayers.\*\* This compares to \$2,040/kilowatt for the 750 megawatt Comanche 3 coal-fired power plant in Pueblo,\*\*\* and \$1,400/kilowatt for a combined cycle natural gas plant.

*Notes:*

\*See page 1, final column of Xcel Energy, [December 2012 RESA budget Report](#), filed 2 February 2013.

\*\*Capacity of Xcel Energy's distributed generation solar panel assets—44.9 megawatts—was taken from [Section 2.11 of the Technical Appendix to Xcel Energy's 2011 Electric Resource Plan](#) (page 341).

\*\*\*The Comanche 3 cost data is derived from following assumptions: Capital cost—\$1.3 billion; and capacity 637 megawatts (85% capacity factor of 750 megawatt nameplate capacity).

Tags: [New Energy Economy](#), [Public Service Company of Colorado](#), [Solar\\*Rewards](#), [Xcel Energy](#)

## [Must reads to celebrate Earth Day](#)

April 22, 2013 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [New Energy Economy](#), [renewable energy](#)

Predictions from the first Earth Day in 1969, "[Environmentalists' Wild Predictions](#)," by Walter Williams:

At the first Earth Day celebration, in 1969, environmentalist Nigel Calder warned, "The threat of a new ice age must now stand alongside nuclear war as a likely source of wholesale death and misery for mankind." C.C. Wallen of the World Meteorological Organization said, "The cooling since 1940 has been large enough and consistent enough that it will not soon be reversed." In 1968, Professor Paul Ehrlich, Vice President Gore's hero and mentor, predicted there would be a major food shortage in the U.S. and "in the 1970s ... hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death." Ehrlich forecasted that 65 million Americans would die of starvation between 1980 and 1989, and by 1999 the U.S. population would have declined to 22.6 million. Ehrlich's predictions about England were gloomier: "If I were a gambler, I would take even money that England will not exist in the year 2000."

It's time for a separation of earth and state. The eco-left "[Earth Day religion: Now there's even a hymn to accompany the theology](#)," by Robert Knight in the *Washington Times*:

Earth Day is emblematic of the Earth religion, which has a decidedly strong sense of superiority of its vision. If you don't believe it, here's the first stanza of the "Earth Day Anthem," set to the tune of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy":

Joyful, joyful we adore our Earth in all its wonderment

Simple gifts of nature that all join into a paradise

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For contrast from the world of old-time religion, here's the first stanza of "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," written by Henry van Dyke in 1907 and found in most hymnals:

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There's a clear line between worshipping the Creator and mistakenly worshipping the creation, and it's not a new error.

Meet a self-described "co-founder" of Earth Day, murder Ira Einhorn, a.k.a. the Unicorn. Reason's Nick Gillespie offers a glimpse into:

a dark corner of the 1960s' and '70s' countercultural carnival, one involving Philadelphia's highest-profile hippie guru: Ira Einhorn, also known as "the Unicorn," a preacher of love and flower power who was convicted of killing his girlfriend in 1977 and stuffing her remains in a trunk that he kept in his apartment.

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However spurious his Earth Day connection, his case is a must-read for anyone interested in the excesses of and bizarreness of the broadly construed hippie movement and the sorts of radical-chic enablers who help obvious sociopaths and psychopaths avoid the law.

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Tags: [Big Solar](#), [Big Wind](#), [Earth Day](#), [New Energy Economy](#), [Nick Gillespie](#), [Reason](#), [Walter Williams](#)

# War on Rural CO: Economic impact of SB 252

April 15, 2013 by [Amy](#) · Comments Off

Filed under: [Archive](#), [Legislation](#), [New Energy Economy](#), [renewable energy](#)

The impact of SB 252, a bill to raise the renewable mandate on rural electric cooperatives, will be devastating to rural Colorado according to [Dr. Roger Bezdek](#), Founder and President of Management Information Services, Inc. Bezdek released a report titled “[The Economic and Jobs Impact of the Proposed Colorado RES](#)” that predicts that, if passed, SB 252 will raise significantly the state’s unemployment rate and electric rates, which directly contradicts what bill sponsors Senate President John Morse and Senator Gail Schwartz have been arguing.

According to Bezdek’s report:

- At present, Colorado’s unemployment rate is below the U.S. average.
- With the RES, the state’s unemployment rate would increase to about 15% above the U.S. average.
- However, job losses resulting from the RES, would be largely concentrated in the predominately rural areas served by the electric coops – many of which are already suffering economically.
- The unemployment rate in these areas would increase substantially and would be more than 1/3 higher than the state average and more than 50% higher than the national unemployment rate.
- At present, Colorado’s average electric rate is below the U.S. average.
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- However, with the RES, the average rate to the predominately rural customers served by the electric coops would increase significantly and would be about 14% higher than the national average.

Bezdek draws on 30 years of experience in “research and management in the energy, utility, environmental, and regulatory areas, serving in private industry, academia and the federal government” and provides a grim forecast for those co-op members living on a fixed income. They will see their residential rates go up \$20 per month.

Sure seems like a war on rural Colorado.

[Colorado RES Impacts 4-12-13 \(1\)](#) by [Amy Oliver](#)

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Break downs for responses to two specific questions listed below:

Do you support or oppose the increased usage of renewable sources to generate electricity?

|       |                      |
|-------|----------------------|
| 70%   | Total Support        |
| 15%   | Total Oppose         |
| <hr/> |                      |
| 42%   | Strongly Support     |
| 28%   | Somewhat Support     |
| 6%    | Somewhat Oppose      |
| 9%    | Strongly Oppose      |
| 15%   | Undecided/Don't Know |
| 1%    | Refused              |

Do you support or oppose the existing state law that requires you to purchase a certain amount of renewable energy each month, even if it costs you more?

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