

The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am concerned about the increasing use and subsidy of wind farms and wind power. Whilst I support the principle of harvesting naturally occurring energy, I am concerned with the degree of due diligence applied before implementing these new technologies.

- There have recently been a number of studies, principally in the USA and Canada indicating that health problems arise with people living within a kilometre of wind turbines. These concerns need to be fully investigated before carte blanche is given to the unrolling of wind programs,
- The impact on the environment, in particular the low frequency hum and its affect on wildlife and livestock, together with the physical danger of the turbine blades when established in traditional flight paths of soaring and migratory bird populations must be adequately addressed as these installations are often critically placed in flight paths. Many birds and animals have differing ranges of sensory perception to humans and their already overstressed habitats do not require additional adverse impact.
- The full efficiency of the wind farms on an annualised basis need to be adequately determined to identify the amount of actual USEABLE energy that is produced for the grid, and its concomitant unit cost be thus determined as this is likely to be a major impost on the taxpayer by way of subsidy. The overall efficiency of wind farms is generally low as seen in the British and Danish industries.
- The cost of balancing power generation infrastructure to compensate for lulls in wind generation, and the overall impact on the efficiency of the systems due to the ramp-up and ramp down time of such generators needs to be adequately accounted for, as overlaps in power generated during these periods is wasted and must ultimately be subtracted from “usable” power generated by the wind farms.
- The life-cycle carbon and other pollution impact of the turbines needs to be determined, as it is unsustainable to export our pollution load by having the products made in China, thereby only delaying the ultimate impact on Australia, not diminishing it.
- The cost of transmission infrastructure upgrades and interfacing equipment needs to be adequately accounted for in determining the viability of wind turbines. The losses in transmission need to be determined and publicly disclosed to demonstrate the extent of power generated actually delivered to end consumers.
- There are significant holes in our current understanding of wind power generation, and omissions in the public disclosure of information concerning the costs establishment and operation of such infrastructure that needs to be thoroughly addressed to allay public concerns before widespread implementation.

I would be appreciative that the above issues of concern can be included in your investigation into the social and economic impact of rural wind farms.

Sincerely

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