

PickensPlan

T. Boone Pickens Media Coverage 1.21.11

Total of 3 Placements

- Print: 1
- Blog/Online: 2

Print Placements (Full Articles Below)

- **Lack of Transmission Lines Is Restricting Wind Power** – *The New York Times* – 1/21/11

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/21/us/21ttransmission.html>

Blog/Online Placements (Full Articles Below)

- **Is nuclear energy an Eco-friendly power source?** – *CoalGeology.com* – 1/21/11

<http://coalgeology.com/is-nuclear-energy-an-eco-friendly-power-source/11571/>

- **Comparing Nuclear Energy to Coal and Natural Gas: Searching answer for America's energy independence** – *CoalGeology.com* – 1/21/11

<http://coalgeology.com/comparing-nuclear-energy-to-coal-and-natural-gas-searching-answer-for-americas-energy-independence/11584/>

PRINT COVERAGE

Lack of Transmission Lines Is Restricting Wind Power – *The New York Times* – 1/21/11

By Kate Galbraith

Texas is in the midst of a wind-power boom, and at the heart of it lies a conundrum: While plenty of ranchers are eager to host wind turbines, few want the unsightly high-voltage transmission lines needed to carry the power to distant cities running through their property.

The lack of transmission lines — and the relatively low price of natural gas — has thwarted the ambitions of wind-power advocates to expand the use of this alternative energy source in Texas. The oilman T. Boone Pickens, for example, bet heavily on wind a couple of years ago, ordering hundreds of turbines and announcing plans to build the world's largest wind farm in the Panhandle at a cost of up to \$12 billion. He later scaled back, canceling some of the turbine orders, giving up his land lease and saying he was looking elsewhere to build.

To encourage others, the state is moving forward on a contentious project to erect \$5 billion worth of transmission wires to connect the turbines to the cities that need power. On Thursday, state regulators met in Austin and approved the route of a controversial line that will run about 140 miles through the Hill Country, one of the state's most scenic regions.

Construction of the line — a project of the Lower Colorado River Authority that will run from Schleicher County to a substation near Comfort — should start next year. Last year, vigorous opposition, by landowners, wealthy newcomers and old-time families, succeeded in derailing plans for another line that the state had wanted to build through the area. Instead, the existing electric infrastructure will be upgraded to carry a greater load. The Public Utility Commission, which is overseeing the process, has also canceled plans for an additional segment of the Hill Country line discussed at the meeting Thursday.

“All Texans love their land,” Barry T. Smitherman, the commission chairman, said in an interview a few days ago. During the process of planning the routes for transmission lines, Mr.

Smitherman said, “we didn’t please everyone, but I think with each of these we really tried to work hard to make it as acceptable as possible for the landowners.”

Texas embarked on the transmission line project, known as Competitive Renewable Energy Zones, several years ago. The need was clear: in West Texas, home to the vast majority of the state’s wind farms, so many turbines have been built over the past decade that some must be shut down during windy periods because there are not enough wires to transport the power. Texas is the leading wind-power state by far, with nearly three times as much capacity as the next-closest state, Iowa. Once built, the new lines are expected to span more than 2,300 miles.

The Hill Country is not the only part of Texas where resistance to new power lines has been fierce. Landowners near Palo Duro Canyon State Park in the Panhandle also put up vigorous opposition. Their arguments against one of the proposed lines prevailed, so it will be built elsewhere and not cross the dramatic canyon landscape. Nonetheless, another line could still go across the canyon. Residents of Denton County, north of Fort Worth, worry that a proposed line could cross landmarks like a park area called the Greenbelt or a Girl Scout camp.

The utilities building the lines can take the land by eminent domain as a last resort, if they and property owners cannot agree on a price for an easement on the land. That would probably be a very unpopular move. Gov. Rick Perry, who appoints the commissioners, just declared that strengthening private property rights was a “legislative emergency” for state lawmakers to take up as soon as possible.

Catherine Frazier, a spokeswoman for the governor, said in an e-mail that Mr. Perry “supports efforts to build the necessary transmission network” to aid wind power’s development.

“He expects utilities to use existing rights of way when possible and look at options to minimize impacts to private landowners,” Ms. Frazier said.

The utility commission has completed its work on many of the routes, Mr. Smitherman said, and all of them should be decided this spring.

The process of choosing routes for the various lines has been a minefield for the three commissioners. Besides landowners' concerns, the commissioners hear testimony about endangered species habitats, airports, military bases, rivers and many other topographical or cultural features that could pose conflicts. Their task is to devise routes that will do the least damage and contain costs, which will be passed on to ratepayers.

Once all the lines are built, they will nearly double the amount of wind-energy capacity in Texas. Last year, wind supplied the Texas power grid with nearly 8 percent of its electricity. The rest of the country averages about 2 percent.

BLOG/ONLINE COVERAGE

Is nuclear energy an Eco-friendly power source? – *CoalGeology.com* – 1/21/11

Environmentalists consider nuclear energy an Earth-friendly power source

Many leading environmentalists agree that nuclear energy should be a force in mitigating the impact of climate change.

Thirty years ago, even some scientists had a misplaced fear of nuclear energy. Today, environmentalists have a bigger concern -; climate change. Ironically, the unfounded threat from the past might solve the current crisis. Nuclear energy could help reverse global warming.

Although Al Gore and T. Boone Pickens have failed to address nuclear solutions in their recent speeches, prominent environmentalists like Patrick Moore, a co-founder of Greenpeace, and James Lovelock, the author of the Gaia theory, write that nuclear technology is a must-use source of carbon-free electricity, with an enviable safety record.

The truth is in the numbers. According to the Nuclear Energy Institute (www.nei.org), America's nuclear power plants prevent 700 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere each year. That's equivalent of the exhaust from 100 million cars.

People might consider nuclear energy with a wary eye, but today's technology proves safer than generating coal-based electricity. No civilian has died from radiation since the U.S. started its nuclear energy programs.

In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Standards, it is safer to work in the nuclear industry than in the manufacturing sector and even the real estate and financial sectors.

Nuclear energy plants use water, but they do not consume it. Most of the water used in nuclear power plants returns to its source, never making contact with the plant's reactor. Nuclear plants use between 26 and 42 gallons of water per household per day. The average American household uses 315 gallons of water per day.

Nuclear "waste" also proves a misnomer. Currently, the U.S. is working on creating a nuclear fuel recycling system. Used nuclear fuel still contains 95 percent of its energy. A recycling program could render nuclear energy practically renewable.

Nuclear energy also is competitive in the electricity market. U.S. nuclear power plants operated at 92 percent of capacity in 2007, with electricity production cost at a record-low 1.76 cents per kilowatt-hour, compared to coal at 2.47 cents and natural gas at 6.78 cents.

One hundred four nuclear power plants currently operate in the U.S. They produce 20 percent of the nation's electricity -; and none of its carbon dioxide emissions.

Comparing Nuclear Energy to Coal and Natural Gas: Searching answer for America's energy independence – *CoalGeology.com* – 1/21/11

Nuclear energy will prove key in establishing America's energy independence and lowering carbon emissions

As climate and energy bills work their way through Congress, it's clear that the Obama administration wants to assert America's energy independence. No single electricity-generating

technology can meet America's future energy needs by itself. But nuclear energy must play a significant role in any viable plan to meet the nation's energy needs and reduce carbon emissions.

Nuclear energy can compete from a cost standpoint with other sources of electricity. While coal and natural gas plants may be less expensive to build — new nuclear plants are estimated to cost \$6 billion to \$8 billion — nuclear energy produces electricity using less fuel and with lower operating costs.

There's also the issue of life span, which varies depending on the technology and makes a difference in evaluating up-front construction costs: Nuclear plants can operate for 60 and possibly 80 years. Wind turbines have an average lifespan of 20 to 30 years, according to Minneapolis-based National Wind, a developer of large-scale wind farms.

Aggressive carbon caps under consideration in Washington will make nuclear energy more attractive. Nuclear power plants do not generate carbon emissions. At the same time, nuclear plants require less acreage and provide more reliable electricity than wind, solar and biomass generators.

A biomass fuel cultivation area would have to be larger than Delaware to replace a nuclear power plant. To produce the same amount of electricity as a 2-unit nuclear power plant, a wind farm would need to be 10 times larger than Washington, D.C.

Consider this: The much-publicized Texas wind farm project that T. Boone Pickens recently postponed was estimated to cost \$10 billion and require up to 200,000 acres. This cost didn't include the estimated \$3 billion to \$6 billion in additional transmission necessary to distribute the energy from its source.

Space constraints and reliability issues prevent renewable sources of electricity from becoming primary power sources. While renewable sources of electricity should play important roles in a diverse energy profile, an emission-free future will require nuclear power. This position has been embraced by a bipartisan majority in the U.S. Congress and by various environmental groups. Tony Kreindler, media director of the Environmental Defense Fund, put it succinctly when he

recently said, “Given the scope of the climate problem and the emissions problem, we need to look at all the energy options we have, and nuclear is one of them.”