

WIND ENERGY FACTS

Operating wind power capacity in the United States now stands at over 105 gigawatts (GW), enough to power 32 million average American homes.¹

More than nine GW of wind energy facilities came online in the United States in 2019, constituting 39% of all new utility-scale power generation installations. This made wind energy the largest contributor to new power generation in the country that year. Over the past 10 years, wind energy has made up 30% of total utility-scale power plant installations.²

Fact: Wind energy helps consumers save money.

The cost of electricity from wind has dropped 70% in the past 10 years, and it is now the cheapest source of electricity in many places across the United States.³ Utility-scale renewable energy prices are now significantly below those for coal and gas generation, and they are less than half the cost of nuclear. This means that building new wind energy generation is cheaper than running existing coal plants. By adding more wind energy to their systems, utilities can help make sure that the consumer costs of energy remain stable or decrease over time.

Fact: Wind energy is reliable.

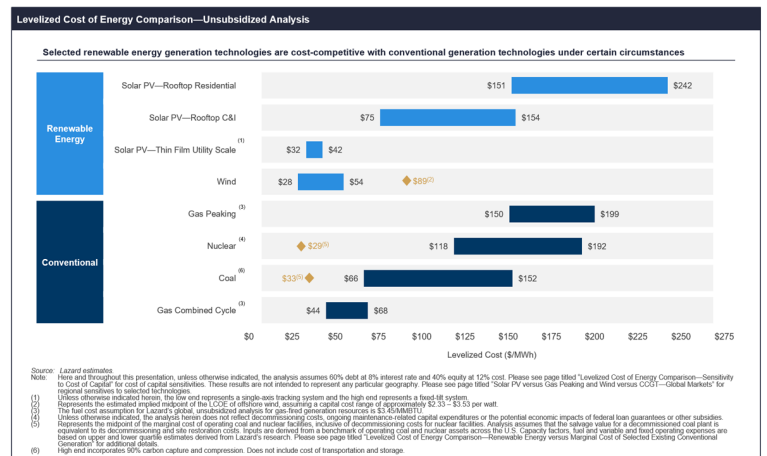
In 2019, wind energy became the largest source of renewable electricity in the United States, generating over 7% of the country's electricity. To put that into perspective, wind now generates enough electricity to meet the demands of California (the world's fourth-largest economy) and New Jersey combined. Six states—Iowa, Kansas, Maine, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota—each generated more than 20% of their electricity from wind last year, and in Iowa and Kansas, wind is now the single largest source of electricity generation, producing over 40% of each state's electricity.⁴

Fact: Well-sited wind farms will help save birds.

Wind farms are sited to avoid critical bird migratory paths and to minimize impacts on sensitive species. Wind farms cause far fewer bird deaths than communications towers and other types of infrastructure, and they play an important part in offsetting the emissions that are causing global temperatures to rise, an effect that scientists expect may put two-thirds of North American birds at increasing risk of extinction.⁵ Wind energy is responsible for less than 0.01 percent of human-caused bird fatalities.⁶

Fact: Wind energy is one of the world's healthiest sources of electricity.

Government- and university-sponsored studies around the world have repeatedly confirmed that modern, properly sited wind turbines pose no threat to public health. A growing number of studies reviewed by independent experts on wind energy and health have reached the same conclusion. A recent Canadian study examined potential impacts of wind turbine sound among people living in close proximity to wind energy facilities. Based on self-reported data from those living near turbines, the study found no evidence that wind turbine sound has any effect on sleep, illnesses, chronic health conditions, perceived stress, or quality of life.⁷ Furthermore, researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health have found that renewable energy generation could have health benefits worth millions of dollars a year.⁸



Source: Lazard, "Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis," Version 13.0, November 2019.

Fact: Wind energy incentives are smaller than those given to other energy sources.

Between 1950 and 2016, 65% of all energy subsidies went to conventional fuel sources.⁹ In fact, for every dollar spent on federal energy incentives, wind energy receives less than 3 cents.¹⁰ Wind energy's most significant incentive, the production tax credit (PTC), has helped wind energy technology develop and become cost-competitive, and it is now in the process of being phased out.

Fact: Wind farms increase local property values.

According to a 2022 study published in the Energy Policy Journal, "...wind energy installation led to economically meaningful increases in county GDP per-capita, income per-capita, median household income, and median home values."¹¹ These effects begin during project construction and accelerate through a project's operating years. Even better news, the study finds that these benefits continue to scale as the amount of installed generating capacity per-capita increases. In other words, the more wind energy in a community, the greater the economic benefit its residents will receive.



SOURCES

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