

Wind Energy Charade: Comparing Apples to Orangutans

One of the most important energy matters to accurately understand is that popular “renewable” electrical energy sources are not even *remotely* equivalent to our conventional energy sources. Not. Even. Close.

Of course renewable lobbyists don’t want consumers and politicians to be aware of that reality, so they go to great lengths to disguise it. Everything they propagate is based on a fictitious “equivalency” between renewables and conventional power sources, that does not exist in the real world.

Even generally objective sources like EIA seriously err when they show such things as leveled cost charts that have wind energy and nuclear power in contiguous columns.

The first problem encountered here is the term “renewables.” This is bantered about like it is: **1)** a scientific definition, and **2)** a homogeneous group of energy sources. This is lobbyist sleight of hand, as neither is true. It isn’t my purpose here to go into the details of this charade but suffice it to say that the definition is very [subjective](#), AND there are extraordinary [differences](#) between various “renewables.”

After you’ve grasped those details, the heavy lifting begins. The trick here is to get our heads around the fundamental disparity between something like wind energy and nuclear power.

I’m just a physicist and not a professional communicator, so wordology doesn’t come natural to me. However, what I have learned is that most people have a better chance of understanding complex matters through an analogy. Let’s try that technique here.

My suggested comparison is to look at two types of *transportation* (a parallel energy sector), using concepts we are all familiar with.

Let’s say that we have a business that repeatedly needs to get 50,000 pounds of heavy merchandise from NY City to Denver, in two days, and shipping cost is important. [In the electricity business this translates to satisfying a demand (load), reliably and economically, through dispatchable energy.]

So how do we ship our products? A superior option is to put this merchandise on an 18-wheeler and send it on its way. Will it always get there 100% of the time without fail? No, flukes do happen. However, if this experiment was repeated 100 times, the truck would arrive over 95% of the time, on schedule and within budget. *This is equivalent to using a conventional energy source, like nuclear power.*

Now let's say greenologists are introduced into the equation, and they arbitrarily add a new requirement that *no fossil fuel can be used (e.g. in the transportation of our goods)*. Oops. Our options are now severely restricted.

Such an arbitrary restriction is the basis for the Renewable Energy Standards (RES) in many states. This results in wind energy being forced on the public.

In our analogy, the parallel choice to using wind energy is to send our business merchandise with golf carts (battery powered, so no fossil fuel will be consumed during transport). The question is: **how many golf carts will it take to replicate the performance of one Mack truck?**

Let's say a golf cart can carry 500 pounds (two golfers with sticks). To transport 50,000 pounds that would work out to 100 golf carts.

This is essentially the message that the lobbyists want you to buy: *that 100± golf carts (wind turbines) will do the job of one 18-wheeler (conventional source: e.g. a coal facility)*. They want you to blink and move on. **Do NOT look behind the curtain!**

But wait! Can the golf carts really get there in two days? Of course not. The lobbyists' flip answer is to add more vehicles: *use 1000 carts!*

Does this "solution" really solve anything? No, but it further confuses citizens and politicians not used to critical thinking. What it also does is *increase shipping costs*, which insures more profit for the cart industry — which is the **ONLY** concern of the lobbyists.

What if the load is a hundred 500 pound pianos? Even though (on paper) a golf cart can carry 500 pounds, can a golf cart transport a piano across the country? The lobbyists' clever answer is to change the customer's requirements(!): *disassemble the load and use more carts*. (Yes, they're slick.)

So will the cost of the golf cart shipping option be comparable to the truck choice? Just to begin with there are 100± drivers vs one — so I think you know the answer, right? And that assumes that 100 carts will be sufficient, which they won't.

And what else will be needed to support this "alternative" source of transportation? A lot: like battery recharge stations throughout the country. And who will pay for that? *Duh*. And will that extra cost be attributable to the golf cart choice? *Not on your life — we needed those recharge stations anyway!*

And what is the source of the electricity used to charge the cart batteries? Mostly fossil fuels. Oops.

After the business says a resounding **no** to the golf cart proposal, the cart promoters come back with another appeal: just send *part* of the load with them. Let them be part of an “all of the above” mix. Try as they might, the business owners couldn’t come up with a plan that sending ANY part of their merchandise with golf carts makes sense from reliability, economic, or environmental perspectives. Can you?

In the face of this evidence, the lobbyists and their academic coconspirators distractingly wave their hands and spout such non-sequiturs as “Don’t worry about the details. Give us 20+ years of large subsidies and we’ll do a great job. Everything will make more sense *mañana*.”

This isn’t how science works!

BEFORE we enter into a contract with them to run this route, these promoters should tell us exactly how many golf carts it will take, and then PROVE that they can deliver our merchandise (on-time, within budget) by actually running this route at least a dozen times. We would then have real-world evidence of the reliability, cost and environmental impact of their proposal.

This is exactly what has NOT been done with wind energy.

They have not only skipped right over the proof stage, right now the golf cart lobbyists are working on convincing our politicians that since businesses have been “resistive” to using their transportation product, that they need a law MANDATING that 20% of all goods from NYC to Denver must go the golf cart route! This is the foolishness that a state’s RES does.

And the new claimed benefit of all of this? *Economic recovery*. There will be lots of new jobs in the golf cart business! Oh, they are all made in China, so the jobs are there. And most of our capital costs simply increase our country’s debt. To China.

And don’t forget about the economic **loss** due to the higher shipping cost, or the slower much less dependable transportation, or the truck drivers who are laid off, or the US Mack truck manufacturing business that closes... Don’t worry about it. Come back *mañana* and it will all make sense.

Hopefully this analogy makes things a bit clearer, as this is the insane energy policy path we are now on. For a more thorough discussion of this situation, see EnergyPresentation.Info.

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