

Wind Energy: Local Economics 101

What about the claim that industrial wind energy projects are a “financial boon” to hard-pressed rural communities? On the surface that sounds plausible, but to evaluate this assertion this we need to look a bit deeper. This is a two part answer...

First, we do **not** select our electrical energy sources based on the economic impact to host communities. Instead our electrical energy sources are chosen because of their **reliability, true cost to ratepayers & taxpayers, proximity to demand centers, dispatchability**, etc.

Wind energy fares poorly on ALL such metrics – which is why wind salespeople try the sleight-of-hand tactic to instead talk about local taxes, local lease payments, etc. We need to be careful about getting tricked by such marketing tactics.

Secondly, the *only* way that we can know if these projects are genuinely an economic asset, is if a proper **NET financial analysis** is done. In other words we need to do a **comprehensive** and **objective** investigation into the *pros* **and** *cons* of these projects.

We know the *positives*, as the developers and their proponents have done a fine job at spelling out the possible benefits: property tax income, lease payments to selected landowners, several construction jobs, a few permanent jobs, etc.

But what about the **negatives**? How do we come up with the numbers on the other side of the equation, so that we can do an accurate NET financial assessment? The answer is to carefully research studies done by *independent* experts – i.e scientists, academics, economists, physicians, etc. who generally have no dog-in-the-fight.

After carefully doing that research here are some reasons why a wind project can be an economic liability to a host community:

1 - Independent experts have concluded that local agricultural income can decrease as: **a)** [bats being killed](#) will [reduce crop yields](#) [to 10± miles away!], **b)** bats are also important [agricultural pollinators](#), **c)** turbines can affect [local weather](#) [up to 15 miles away!] which will also lower crop yields, and **d)** in some cases, farmers with turbine leases will reduce or terminate operations.

See [more information](#) about the importance of Bats, and their killing by turbines, plus a detailed explanation as to why [Wind Energy Clashes with Real Farming](#).

2 - Studies from independent experts have concluded that there can be serious hydro-geological consequences from wind projects. Here is a sample [study](#) done in Vermont.

Here's another example of a [Hydro-Geological Study](#) near a proposed wind project.

3 - Studies from independent experts have concluded tourism will drop in the region. For example, [North Carolina State University](#) (avid wind proponents) surveyed tourists. Although the majority of the visitors stated that they supported wind energy, **80%±** said that they would **not** vacation in an area where wind turbines were visible. Some other studies that have concluded that tourism will be reduced are listed [here](#).

[Multiple studies](#) conclude tourism can decline near industrial wind facilities.

4 - Studies from independent experts have concluded that property values will decrease for residences within 1± miles of a wind project. This was the conclusion of largest study in the world on this topic, done by the [London School of Economics](#).

[Numerous studies](#) about residential property value losses near wind projects.

5 - Studies from medical professionals have concluded that some nearby citizens will experience adverse health effects. The biggest concern is from infrasound (noise we can not hear). The World Health Organization has [stated](#) (p53) that infrasound is more problematic than audible sound. Infrasound can be so harmful that the US military is researching [weaponizing it](#). Over a hundred studies have concluded that there will be health consequences ([here](#) is a representative sample, including [cancer](#)).

[Some Human Health Costs](#) ([many more health studies](#); special report about [cancer](#)).

6 - Studies from independent experts have concluded that industrial wind projects can cause major eco-system damage. See this sample [study](#) (esp. pages 103-122).

For more examples of ecosystem destruction see: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

7 - Studies from independent experts have concluded that industrial wind projects can harm wildlife and livestock animals. Sample reports: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

For some additional reports on wildlife and livestock see: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

8 - Studies from independent experts have concluded that industrial wind projects can adversely affect local hunting (and possibly fishing). Here is a detailed [explanation](#) of that, with multiple studies cited.

9 - Research by independent experts has shown that wind projects can cause serious interference with military facilities. Here is [an overview](#) of the topic, citing multiple studies and reports.

10-Despite implications otherwise, leaseholders can suffer economic losses. See this [explanation](#) of 40+ possible legal and financial liabilities to signing turbine leases.

11-Several studies explaining how industrial wind energy can (and does) interfere with [Multiple Communications](#) (including [Radar](#)).

12-Not surprisingly, here are 50 reports concluding [Green energy jobs claims are a ruse](#). If that isn't enough, here are [numerous other similar studies](#).

So what might the NET be after taking the *positives* and *negatives* into account? A sample analysis was done of the proposed NY [Horse Creek](#) wind project. The conclusion is: the *annual* NET economic impact would likely be a **loss of \$10± Million**.

For comparison, an analysis of the NC [Timbermill](#) wind project was also done. The conclusion is that there could be a NET economic **loss of \$7± Million a year**.

So before any community can say that a “wind project is a financial windfall,” a *comprehensive* and *objective* financial analysis **must** be done. Right now, *no one* in any federal, state or local agency, is thoroughly investigating these wind energy liabilities.

Find out what the net economic impact of a proposed wind project is for your community, by filling out the report template on the [Key Documents](#) page (under *Economic Arguments*) of [WiseEnergy.org](#). Based on what has happened in other communities, it should only take about four (4) hours of work to put that together.

Without such an analysis, all financial claims are simply one-side of the economic equation – and are **not** an accurate representation of the NET economic impact. The evidence to date indicates that wind energy is the “gift” that keeps on taking.

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