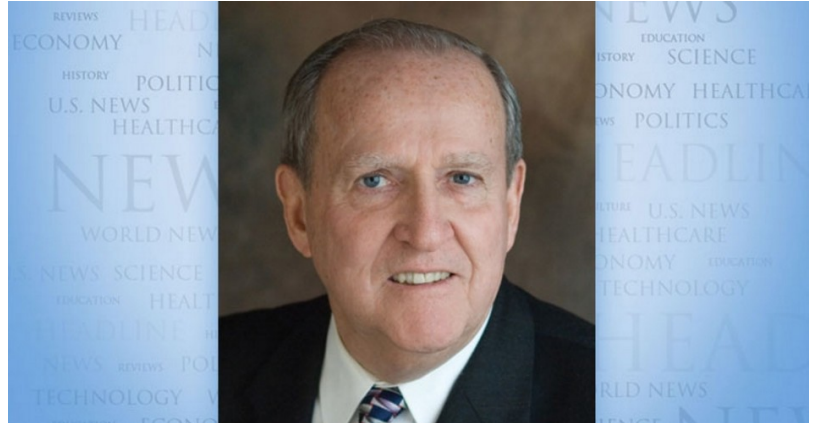




Written by [John F. McManus](#) on October 9, 2019

Wind Turbines Not an Answer

Hardly a day goes by without reminders of supposedly dire consequences caused by climate change. The mass media, the United Nations, government leaders, and some unreliable scientists remind us incessantly that the earth is being destroyed by humans putting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The increasingly wild claim is always accompanied by calls for more government leading to total government. Promoters of this immense scam have recently taken their wild conclusions to children in the nation's schools.



The popularly suggested solution to the impending non-crisis calls for replacing the use of fossil fuels with renewable energy that doesn't put carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. It sounds like a wise and workable plan, but it isn't. Occasionally, someone spends the time and does the research needed to counter the near hysteria and publish undeniable facts including the certainty that carbon dioxide — .04 percent of our atmosphere — isn't a problem and is a boon to plant growth.

A retired engineer friend from Oregon has, like most Americans, seen huge wind turbines erected to generate electricity and cancel the need for burning coal, oil, and natural gas. The plan to rely on the wind, simply stated, involves cancelling the generation of electricity when burning the fuels found in the earth. But advocates of doing away with current methods of producing electricity never discuss how much energy they are using to build and install wind turbines.

My engineer friend claims that a typical wind turbine requires 900 tons of steel, 2500 tons of concrete, and 45 tons of non-recyclable plastic. The manufacture of each wind turbine starts with converting iron into steel, a process needing large amounts of fossil fuel energy. Transporting the freshly mined ore, then the steel, and finally the finished structure and blades to capture the wind requires employing trains and trucks using fuels to deliver these products. Once in operation, the turbines need huge batteries that have to be produced with fossil fuel power so they can store the small amount of electricity captured by harnessing the wind.

My acquaintance states that the cost of manufacturing, operating, and maintaining each wind turbine will never generate as much energy payback as was invested in building it. The disparity is regularly covered by government subsidies which means that taxpayers are required to fund a project that doesn't solve a made-up problem.

Because electric power is essential, there has to be a better way to generate it. There surely is, and its name is nuclear power. It's safe, clean, and abundant once a power plant is in operation. It produces no carbon dioxide and few problems dealing with nuclear waste. Newer techniques have also been devised to produce nuclear power electricity even more efficiently once a plant gets built. Is safety a concern? Of course, but U.S. Navy ships are powered by small reactors and their record of safe operation after 12,000 reactor years in operation is unblemished. If a ship at sea, even a submarine, can be powered by a small nuclear reactor, a larger reactor can power a whole city.



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Still, rather than expand reliance on nuclear generated power, the United States is cutting back. China is already planning to build 150 new plants and is looking ahead to creating 300 more. Here in the United States, the cost of building a nuclear power plant — 6 to 8 times what other nations require — has skyrocketed because of federal requirements. Our country is closing nuclear power plants instead of building more.

So let's arrive at a few conclusions. Wind turbines are noisy, don't pay for themselves, and require the use of fossil fuels to be built and transported. Nuclear power has proven to be clean, safe, and cost-efficient even with the heavy financial burdens placed on it by U.S. government regulations. Man-produced carbon dioxide is minuscule, and the small amount in existence is not a problem. And, finally, the American people are being misinformed by the mass media, the United Nations, some government leaders, and a pack of unreliable scientists. It's well past the time to change course and let real facts and honesty prevail.

John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#).



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