

EDITORIALS & LETTERS

The debate about wind energy - there is middle ground!

BY MARGARET STAHLHEBER

I have been reading some of the articles for and against wind energy ie: January 2010 Back Country Messenger. Randy Lenac supporting it and Donna Tisdale opposing it at least in the commercial form. Mr. Lenac has expressed his opinion on the pursuit of renewal energy in the form of wind energy. He is promoting commercial projects.

Mrs. Tisdale has attacked Mr. Lenac and accused him of being on the "take" for one of the big energy producing companies. I say (even if he is) "so what!" My husband and I have been attempting to pursue some form of renewable energy for our own home. We have been unable to achieve this goal due to the high costs of photo voltaic (well over \$100,000) or a windmill. Many of us will never be able to take advantage of clean energy in any form unless it is offered to us through some company that is putting out millions of dollars to develop it. Any company putting out that kind of investment would naturally expect to make a profit. Again I say "so what!"

That is what this country is about. Free enterprise.

In the past I have run into people in this community who do not want windmills on the ridges. They do not want commercial solar panels within view. Neither of these are reasonable, in my opinion. It is windier on the ridges, and solar panels cannot be entirely hidden if they must face the southern sky.

I am of the belief that we need to become independent of foreign oil. We need to become energy independent. Solar, wind and nuclear are our best choices at this time in history, as far as I can see, but then I do not believe there is such a thing as "clean" coal. Can you imagine what a stink would occur in this community if someone tried to build a nuclear power plant here? All of these things are in their baby stages. Without development and use that would lead to improvements they will never get out of the baby stage. We have to start somewhere.

Mrs. Tisdale has concerns concerning the health and welfare of the community and wildlife. Also she

expresses a concern for wildfire. Each of these concerns should be able to be addressed one at a time and mitigated in one way or another. Distance and clearing might be all that is necessary to address several of the issues. Let us not cut off our nose to spite our face.

Not all of you are old enough to remember Mission Valley in the early 1950's. I was a teenager when they built a huge highway to replace a 2 lane road. They then changed the name from Highway 80 to Interstate 8. There was very little traffic. It was a far seeing plan. It was necessary, but we sure could not see the sense of it then. Can you imagine what Mission Valley would be like today if it was still a 2 lane road?

We need to get on the clean energy bandwagon in the form of wind and solar if our grandchildren and great grandchildren are going to live in a modern world. I am confident that just as T.V. antennas are a thing of the past there will be major improvements in wind and solar energy production if we would just let the industry get started.

December article "How Our Government Works" challenged

Dear Editor,

I was dismayed to read How Our Government Works in the December 2009 issue. It contains dangerous factual errors.

To ask whether we live in a democracy or a republic is like asking whether I drive a truck or a motor vehicle. The answer is both, because a truck is a type of motor vehicle. Similarly, a republic is a type of democracy. It's not "either or." It's "and also."

I went to dictionary.com and looked at the definitions of "democracy" and "republic." The first definition for "democracy" is: "government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system."

The first definition for "republic" is: "a state in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote and is

exercised by representatives chosen directly or indirectly by them."

Do you see that the definition of republic is included in the definition of democracy? "Democracy" is a broad term, and "republic" is more narrow. A republic is a representative democracy. If you doubt my findings, please consult any dictionary you would like, or any other (non-politically-biased) source. I'd be very interested if you find any support for the views you expressed.

I agree with you about the dangers of direct democracy, which can lead to mob rule. Mob rule is responsible for such horrors as lynchings, vigilantism, the Rwandan genocide, the Holocaust, and others too numerous to mention. But to equate the word "democracy" with mob rule is an abuse of the English language. We cannot change the meaning of words according to our whims or perceived threats.

And where in the world did

you get the idea that in a representative democracy, "sovereignty is exercised by a subset of the people"? Nonsense! Again, I challenge you to cite any (non-politically-biased) source to bolster this claim.

Why do I call your errors dangerous? Because they degrade the quality of our political discourse, which is already at a very low level. "Democracy" is a perfectly good word, and it describes an honorable value. Sure, we can argue about how we want to implement democracy, but to try to convince people that democracy is suddenly a bad thing just muddies the waters, and further splits our already fractured country.

I implore you to print this letter in its entirety, and to retract the factual errors I have outlined above.

Respectfully,
Ernie Bornheimer
Lemon Grove



Wind Generation, Solar Power, Common Sense

BY TONY NEFF

I have been reading about the effects of the wind generation business, and large scale solar generation on communities, with regards to property values and quality of life issues. As always there are two takes on the studies, what I have taken away from the study is that the facts state the value of wind and solar generation as renewable energy sources mandated by state law. Very soon energy companies like Sempra will be required to derive 20% of their electricity from renewable sources (by this year) and 33% by 2020. To accommodate this growth industry we will need power lines to transfer the generated power from source to end user. In the long range planning of Sempra Energy the stated goal of the Sunrise Powerlink is to accommodate new solar and wind energy created in the Imperial Valley and the wind ridges of Eastern San Diego County. Power created in Mexico will also be purchased by Sempra to feed into the grid. This public knowledge is part of the long range planning by Sempra Energy, and has been in the news for several years. Donna Tisdale of Boulevard and North County Groups have fought an aggressive fight to prevent the Sunrise Powerlink from being built,

citing it is unnecessary in the first place.

The original route was to travel through the Anza Desert and then inland near Warner Springs and on through communities westward. Then came the alternate route from Jacumba west through Boulevard, on through Campo, and finally emerging to be buried in the streets of Alpine, where it will then travel northwest to the stated end users.

The quandary, it appears, is to placate state mandates and appease residents who do not want huge power lines dissecting their communities. The courts will decide if the power link will be built as the give and take of litigation plays out through appeals.

If one were to take a common sense approach to the route to be built, you might think it would be prudent to affect as few people as possible. The Messenger has carried several stories regarding the different opinions of its residents. Randy Lenac was accused by Donna Tisdale of being in the pocket of Sempra Energy because he reasoned if it is to be built; how can it help our communities? His take on wind generation is; if it is to be built then you need

Using our heads and our renewable resources

It is nearly impossible to read anything about energy without renewable energy coming up. These days, governments all over the world are turning their attention to ensuring their countries, states, counties or cities have access to reliable energy sources, including the clean and green kind.

An obvious reason for this is because of the environmental benefits. By using wind, solar or geothermal resources instead of fossil fuels, the levels of greenhouse gases emitted into our atmosphere are lessened. Additionally, we aren't relying on resources that we could run out of such as coal, oil or

natural gas. It takes a long time to create those forms of energy. However, the sun will shine and the wind will blow, maybe not every day but we know it's unlikely we will run out of either.

Developing countries such as China are learning about all the benefits green power has to offer. China is one of the highest greenhouse gas emitters in the world. They understand the importance of lowering their emissions, knowing how everyone will gain from this (http://pdf.wri.org/working_papers/an_emerging_revolution.pdf).

Another advantage to using clean energy sources is to rely less on the volatile market of fossil fuels.

Oftentimes oil, coal or other resources can be tied up in political strife such as trade disputes, embargoes or even war (<http://www.pier55.com/technology/energy/benefits-of-renewable-energyD>). These conflicts can drive the price of the resources up. That would unlikely happen with the sun or wind.

Renewable energy cannot only help us to produce less pollution, it can also help our economic and job development. For example, the building of wind farms will create construction jobs. However, many of the jobs associated with wind farms come after construction (<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/legosti/>

fv97/20505.pdf). Most of the jobs associated with wind farms are operating and maintaining wind power plants. Renewable energy development can be very beneficial to our rural communities in particular by bringing new local jobs and generating income for landowners.

Energy prices have skyrocketed over the past few years. Everyone is looking to find cheaper, more reliable energy sources, including our government. Let's do the same and benefit from resources that are found in our very own Back Country.

Sid Fox Campo

Back Country Messenger Online Community Forum

Find out what your neighbors have to say! Voice your opinions! Participate in the Back Country Messenger Online Community Forum

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