

Submitted via email.  
June 1, 2015

Dear Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department,

I was concerned to read in the Lincoln Journal Star recently that the proposed standards for wind farm development in Lancaster County could be the strictest in the entire country.

While no one wants to promote regulations that endanger the public health, it's important, I think, to look at the entire energy picture. Currently, Nebraska is still overwhelmingly reliant on coal for its electrical power. Coal-fired energy -- including from the Sheldon Station -- is renowned for its detrimental impacts on human health... And it is the dirtiest form of energy in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon dioxide has already been scientifically linked to climate change and extreme weather events. It is not as if, accordingly, Lancaster County can erect standards impeding the development of renewable energy, continue with the business as usual of burning coal, and still simultaneously claim to be protecting human health. Every energy source has a 'down side' that has to be taken into consideration when choices regarding our energy generation are being made.

Lincoln and Lancaster County are making enormous strides in adopting 'green' behaviors. We are by many accounts national leaders. Effectively banning renewable wind energy from our county by implementing development standards that will prohibit the wind farm development dramatically undercuts our efforts to reduce our dependence on carbon -- as well as opens us up to the charge of NIMBYism.

Some sensible wind development standards have been proposed:

- Adopting updated noise regulations for commercial wind farms that use a day time limit of 75 decibels and night time limit of 50 decibels.
- Establishing a wind-turbine specific penalty in dollar terms for violations of the limits.
- Mandating that wind turbine setbacks should be no less than 1,000 feet from a non-participating residence.

I urge the Planning Commission to adopt these prudent and pragmatic standards when developing a policy on wind energy development. Business as usual (either by continuing to rely on coal-fired power or expecting someone else to supply our clean energy when we possess such splendid wind potential) is not a viable policy environmentally or politically.

Parochialism has no place in this policy discussion. We're all in this together.

Thank you.

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**"We have less than 10 years to halt the global rise in greenhouse gas emissions if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences for people and the planet.  
It is, simply, the greatest collective challenge we face as a human family."**

-- U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Aug. 9, 2009