

Beyond Belief:

The Obama Administration's



All Out, None-of-the-Above Energy Strategy

**New Details from the Senate and Congressional Western
Caucuses on the Obama Administration's Actions to
Turn off America's Electricity**

Senator John Barrasso (WY) and Congressman Stevan Pearce (NM-2)

Rhetoric

*"This country needs an **all-out**, all-of-the-above strategy that develops every available source of American energy – a strategy that's cleaner, cheaper, and full of new jobs."*

– **President Obama, State of the Union Speech 2012**

Reality

*"In spite of their rhetoric, the Obama Administration and its allies have repeatedly taken action to **turn off electricity** production across America. They've shut down coal plants, undermined nuclear power, and shipped taxpayer funded green jobs overseas. It's time for President Obama to take action to support American energy development and good jobs across the country."*

– **Senator John Barrasso, Chairman of the Senate Western Caucus**

"As it was in the frontier days of the late 19th century, the West remains an economic engine for our country with boundless opportunities. However, the hypocrisy of the Obama Administration's energy policies continues to hamper job creators and handcuff America's energy producers. Our leader's need to understand that the key to prosperity lies in the West and must put policies in place to unleash that potential."

– **Congressman Stevan Pearce, Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus**

Beyond Belief: The Obama Administration's All Out, None-of-the-Above Energy Strategy

From his State of the Union speeches to the White House website, President Obama has touted his “all-of-the-above” energy plan in every possible forum. Meanwhile, his Administration and its allies in the extreme environmental activist community continue to actively shut off American electricity production.

This report highlights the Administration’s “say one thing, do another” approach to electricity production in America.

When Administration officials are in coal states, they praise coal. Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency pushes policies to eliminate coal in the name of climate change.

When the President touted solar power in his State of the Union address, his goal was to give hope to out of work voters in the Rust Belt. But he forgot to mention that taxpayer funded “investments” in solar are going bankrupt and green jobs are disappearing or going overseas.

Extreme environmental activist groups, unions and others allied with the Administration have pursued a successful “none-of-the-above” approach to electricity production in the courts. The Obama Administration has failed to rein in these groups and criticize their tactics or policy goals.

Instead of making electricity more affordable, the Obama Administration has made it unavailable and unaffordable.

Key Findings:

This report highlights the roadblocks to electricity production by the Obama Administration and its allies.

- **Coal and Natural Gas** - Carbon intensive energy such as coal and natural gas is being blocked in the name of climate change through oppressive regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies, and lawsuits by environmental activist groups.
- **Hydropower** - The President ignored hydropower in his energy plan’s website, and nominated an official (Rebecca Wodder) to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife at the Department of the Interior who actively campaigned against hydropower while being head of American Rivers. That group and other allied activist groups continue to pursue hydro-dam removals.

- **Nuclear Energy** - The President appointed an official to be Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Gregory Jaczko) at the request of Majority Leader Harry Reid, who was hostile to nuclear power and actively worked against its development with the support of allied activist groups.
- **Wind and Solar** - The President has overstated the importance of renewable energies, such as solar and wind power, making the case that these energy resources should be the centerpiece of America's electricity mix. The federal government's own Energy Information Administration (EIA) tells a different story. It projects that electricity generation from all renewable sources (including hydropower) will be only 15 percent of the total share of electricity generation in the U.S. by 2035.
 - ✓ In addition, the President's investments in companies to develop solar power with taxpayer dollars, such as Solyndra, have failed.
 - ✓ The President also refuses to admit that solar and wind power are meeting stiff resistance from environmental allies because they are viewed by these groups as "land hog" energy sources that require thousands upon thousands of acres to develop leaving a large footprint on the landscape.

Beyond Coal: Bankrupting Coal Communities



Coal remains the most cost-effective and plentiful energy resource in the United States and the Obama Administration has acknowledged this. In a March 2012 visit to Wyoming to promote the coal industry, [Ken Salazar, the Secretary of the Interior, declared:](#)

“Coal is a critical component of America’s comprehensive energy portfolio... it’s important that we continue to encourage safe production of this important resource.”

This declaration contradicted President Obama’s previous comments on the coal industry which indicate nothing short of contempt. On January 17th, 2008, then presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama said his Administration would bankrupt coal-fired power plants:

*“Let me sort of describe my overall policy. What I’ve said is that we would put a cap and trade system in place that is as aggressive, if not more aggressive, than anybody else’s out there....So if somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can; **it’s just that it will bankrupt them because they’re going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that’s being emitted....So if somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can. It’s just that it will bankrupt them.**” – [San Francisco Chronicle](#), January 17, 2008*

On September 16, 2008, then vice presidential candidate Joe Biden made the following statement to an activist at a campaign rally in Maumee, Ohio:

*“**We’re not supporting clean coal...No coal plants here in America. Build them, if they’re going to build them, over there [in China] and make them clean because they’re killing you.**” – [ABC News](#), September 2008*

After Congress rejected President Obama’s cap and trade legislation, the President stated that:

“Cap and trade was just one way of skinning the cat; it was not the only way.”– Associated Press, November 2010

Since cap and trade was largely rejected by both the public and Congress, the Administration has issued a large number of regulations to eliminate coal production and coal-fired electric generation in the United States. New regulations and proposed rules on greenhouse gases, coal ash, mercury emissions and industrial boilers will lead to a regulatory disaster that will result in the closing of dozens of power plants in the U.S., raise taxes, and cost our country thousands of jobs. The following chart outlines the Obama Administration’s most significant proposed and final rules pertaining to coal production and coal-fired electric generation:

Agency	Rule	Annual Costs	Status
EPA	Cross State Air Pollution Rule	\$2.4 billion	Final
EPA	Utility MACT Rule	\$9.6 billion	Final
EPA	NSPS for Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not available	Proposed
EPA	NAAQS for Sulfur Dioxide	\$1.5 billion	Final
EPA	NAAQS for Ozone	\$19 billion to \$90 billion	Postponed
EPA	NAAQS for Particulate Matter	Not available	Under Review
EPA	Cooling Water Intake Rule	\$319 million	Proposed
EPA	Steam Electric Power Plant EGLs	Not available	Under Review
EPA	Coal Combustion Waste Rule	\$597 million to \$1.5 billion	Proposed
Interior	Stream Buffer Zone Rule	Not available	Under Review
Army Corps	Nationwide Permit 21 for Surface Coal Mining Activities	Not available	Final

The Obama Administration is now attempting to prevent companies from exporting American coal. On April 5th, 2012, the EPA sent a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stating that coal exports from the United States have:

“the potential to significantly impact human health and the environment...Consider, for example, the cumulative impacts to human health and the environment from increases in greenhouse gas emissions, rail traffic, mining activity on public lands, and the transport of ozone, particulate matter, and mercury from Asia to the United States.”

The Obama Administration’s efforts to stop American coal exports are taking place at the same time that environmental extremists are trying to stop the use of coal completely. The environmental group WildEarth Guardians has started a [campaign to completely shut down the western coal industry](#):

“We are holding the line and preventing the construction of new coal-fired power plants in the West...We are spurring the retirement of existing coal-fired power plants...We are tackling coal mining and coal-fired power plants in the Colorado Plateau region of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona...Our vision is a coal-free Colorado Plateau.”

The Importance of Coal–

- ***According to the Energy Information Administration, coal provided about 42% of total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation in 2011.***
- ***The United States holds the world's largest estimated recoverable reserves of coal and is a net exporter of coal. In 2011, our nation's coal mines produced more than a billion short tons of coal, and more than 90% of this coal was used by U.S. power plants to generate electricity. – Energy Information Administration***
- ***U.S. coal mining directly employs nearly 136,000 people and for each coal mining job, an additional 3.5 jobs are created elsewhere in the economy. The National Mining Association estimates 50,000 new employees will be needed in coal mining over the next 10 years to meet increasing demand and to replace retiring workers. - National Mining Association***

Beyond Natural Gas: Severing the Bridge to Future Affordable Energy



The White House has touted its strong support for natural gas as a viable alternative to cheap, affordable coal.

President Obama stated during his 2012 State of the Union address that:

“We have a supply of natural gas that can last America nearly one hundred years, and my Administration will take every possible action to safely develop this energy. Experts believe this will support more than 600,000 jobs by the end of the decade.”

“The development of natural gas will create jobs and power trucks and factories that are cleaner and cheaper, proving that we don’t have to choose between our environment and our economy.”

In a May 4th, 2012 blog, the [White House](#) posted the following statement:

“Since taking office, President Obama has supported an all-out, all-of-the-above strategy that develops every available source of American energy. A strategy that’s cleaner, cheaper, and full of new jobs.”

“As part of that effort, the Administration has focused on expanding production of natural gas. After all, we have a supply of natural gas that can last America nearly 100 years. And this Administration will continue to take steps to develop this energy resource in a way that can help fuel our economy and, according to industry experts, support more than 600,000 jobs by the end of the decade.”

The rhetoric of the White House does not match the actions of this Administration and its allies in the environmental community.

A May 9th, 2012 [Bloomberg](#) news story highlights an important point made by Jack Gerard, President of the American Petroleum Institute and Dave McCurdy, President of the American Gas Association:

“Both Gerard and McCurdy had been emphasizing one point: While Obama had called for more gas production, as many as a dozen federal agencies were considering various rules or policies that could deal drilling a setback.”

In fact, then presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama campaigned against natural gas as part of his cap and trade climate change agenda when [he famously stated](#):

*“Under my plan of a cap and trade system, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket. Even regardless of what I say about whether coal is good or bad. **Because I’m capping greenhouse gases, coal power plants, you know, natural gas, you name it** — whatever the plants were, whatever the industry was they would have to retrofit their operations. That will cost money. They will pass that money on to consumers.”* – San Francisco Chronicle, January 17, 2008

It is important to note that the Sierra Club has [once again endorsed President Obama](#). Mr. Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, stated on April 12th, 2012 that the Sierra Club [“shares the same vision for America as the President.”](#) This makes sense since the Sierra Club has been a strong supporter of President Obama’s climate change initiatives. On May 3rd of this year, the Sierra Club announced their “Beyond Natural Gas” campaign. In its [press release](#), the organization states:

“Today the Sierra Club unveiled a new campaign name – Beyond Natural Gas – for its ongoing efforts to move away from natural gas and towards a clean energy future.

“Switching from one dirty fossil fuel to another only creates a new set of problems,’ said Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. ‘We need to wean ourselves from all fossil fuels, including natural gas, by 2050, and we need to start that transition from natural gas to clean energy yesterday.’”

In a May 7th, 2012 *Energy and Environment Daily* article, the Executive Director of the Sierra Club spelled out his intentions towards new natural gas plants:

“As we push to retire coal plants, we’re going to work to make sure we’re not simultaneously switching to natural-gas infrastructure,’ Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune told National Journal in an interview on Wednesday. ‘And we’re going to be preventing new gas plants from being built wherever we can.”

Sierra Club says in a [generic constituent letter](#) that they encourage their membership to send the following message to Congress:

“Natural gas is dirty, dangerous, and puts millions at risk. We have already seen water contamination, air pollution, and wildlife habitat destruction from this drilling practice, and exporting gas would mean more harm to our communities. It also is a major contributor to climate change. We need to produce as little natural gas as possible and wean ourselves from this dirty fossil fuel, not expand production.”

A May 7th, 2012 [New York Post editorial](#) summed it up when they said:

“When it comes to the environmentalist opposition to natural gas development, logic has no place.”

The Importance of Natural Gas–

- *According to the Energy Information Administration, natural gas provided about 25% of total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation in 2011.*
- *“The positive effects include: reducing the need for imported energy while enhancing U.S. energy security; creating American jobs for drilling, pipelines and production facilities; helping stabilize domestic natural gas prices; increasing royalty and tax receipts for the federal and state governments; and contributing to the U.S. becoming a net exporter of natural gas by 2021, according to EIA forecasts.” - U.S. Department of Energy*
- *98.5% of the natural gas we use in the United States comes from North America, and supplies are abundant. Gas utilities serve more than 65 million residential customers and more than 5 million commercial enterprises. - American Gas Association*
- *Natural gas has a multitude of industrial uses, including providing the base ingredients for such varied products as plastic, fertilizer, anti-freeze, and fabrics. In fact, industry is the largest consumer of natural gas, accounting for 43% of natural gas use across all sectors. Natural gas is the second most used energy source in industry. - Natural Gas Supply Association*

Beyond Hydropower: The Neglected Clean Energy



In almost every discussion about energy policy, President Obama mentions hydropower as a key component of his “all-of-the-above” American energy strategy:

“As part of President Obama’s all-of-the-above strategy to develop American energy, the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Army, and the Department of Energy have significantly advanced potential development of hydropower generation in the United States.”- [Department of the Interior](#)

“[In his speech,] President Barack Obama said he wanted to broaden the definition of what is clean to include hydropower...” -[The Birmingham News](#), February 13, 2011

“The centerpiece of the Administration’s strategy is a Clean Energy Standard, or ‘CES’ – which would double the share of electricity from clean energy sources to 80 percent by 2035 from a wide variety of clean energy sources, including renewable energy sources like wind, solar, biomass, and hydropower...” -[Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future Progress Report](#), March 2012

Anne Castle, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior, was quoted in an April 24th, 2012 [editorial](#) as saying:

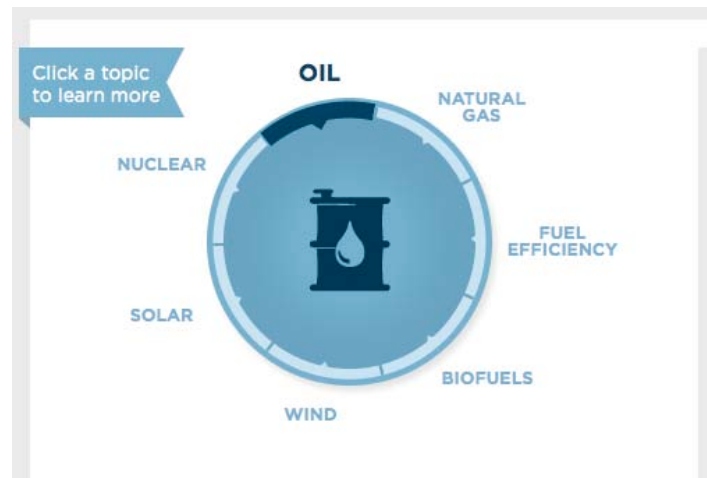
“Through collaboration and partnerships among federal agencies, the hydropower industry, the research community, and numerous stakeholders, we are succeeding in advancing the development of hydropower as a clean, reliable, cost-effective and sustainable energy source.

“From assessing opportunities for new generation on existing federal facilities to developing tools to get more energy from the same amount of water, we are working on many fronts to increase the potential of the largest source of renewable energy to the country.”

Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior, said in an April 12th, 2012 [press release](#):

“Hydropower is an important part of President Obama’s initiative to generate 80 percent of electricity in this country from a diverse set of clean energy sources by 2035. Identifying and developing hydropower potential at existing facilities is one way we’re putting the all-of-the-above strategy to develop American energy sources into practice.”

With so many mentions of the positive impacts of hydropower, one would expect it to play a large role in the President’s plans for America’s energy future. However, the President recently published his “all-of-the-above” energy policy in a simplified interactive graphic—and there is something distinctly absent from his plan (and not just coal).



Despite the President’s claims that hydropower is a critical component of a clean energy policy, its absence in this chart seems reflective of the Administration’s actual view of this important resource.

President Obama has even gone so far as to nominate environmental activists to top positions in his Administration who have taken public stands against the use of hydropower. Rebecca Wodder, former Obama nominee to be the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior, had previously taken a firm stance against the expansion of hydropower during her time as the [President of the environmental group American Rivers](#):

“... damming, drilling, digging and burning to produce energy [will] pollute drinking water, deny the public recreational opportunities, and drive river wildlife to extinction.”

The Sierra Club, a major supporter of President Obama, has outwardly opposed hydropower on numerous occasions, saying on its website:

“Hydropower produces no air pollution or global-warming pollution, but the environmental effects of damming rivers can be severe.”

Steve Stein with Stanford University’s Hoover Institute summed up the effects of opposing hydropower in his August 1st, 2012 article entitled [“The Environmentalist’s Dilemma”](#):

“Hydroelectric power is still by far the nation’s leading source of renewable energy, but if the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Wilderness Society won all their dam removal battles, this would no longer be so.

“In fact, if other sources of renewable power — sun, wind, geothermal, and biomass — were developed only at the rate that the Department of Energy currently projects, the nation would actually experience a net loss of renewable power in the next decade.”

Upon closer examination, the Administration and its allies are putting up smoke and mirrors instead of developing this clean and environmentally friendly power.

The Importance of Hydropower –

- *According to the [Energy Information Administration](#), renewable energy sources provided about 13% of total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation in 2011. Hydropower accounted for 63% of that 13%.*
- *In March of 2012, [the Atlantic published a piece](#) documenting the top ten renewable energy states. All ten states, including the seven that were located in the West, used hydropower as their top renewable power source.*
- *“Hydropower is a proven renewable energy resource generated and used in all regions of the U.S. for over a century, today providing more than 30 million homes with affordable power.” - [National Hydropower Association](#)*
- *“With an average lifetime of 50 to 100 years, hydroelectric developments are long-term investments that can benefit various generations. They can be easily upgraded to incorporate more recent technologies and have very low operating and maintenance costs.” - [U.S. Geological Survey](#)*

Beyond Nuclear: Powering Down Nuclear Energy



Nuclear power is a critical component to the future of American energy. President Obama himself has made positive statements about nuclear power and has touted it as part of his “all-of-the-above” energy strategy.

After the Fukushima disaster in Japan, [CNS news reported](#) that President Obama said in a March 16th, 2011 KDKA TV interview in Pittsburgh that:

"I think it is very important to make sure that we are doing everything we can to insure the safety and effectiveness of the nuclear facilities that we have."

However, the Obama Administration appointed Gregory Jaczko, a completely unprofessional and unqualified official, to oversee the nuclear industry as Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Chairman Jaczko slowed down the permitting and licensing of nuclear power plants, routinely disagreed with the bipartisan majority of commissioners and grossly mismanaged this key agency.

As reported in a June 26th, 2012 press release by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Ranking Member James Inhofe, an NRC Inspector General Report on Chairman Jaczko’s tenure found the following:

"OIG identified more than 15 examples of interactions between the Chairman and NRC senior executive and Commissioners where the Chairman's behavior was not supportive of an open and collaborative work environment. NRC holds licensees accountable for behavior by senior

managers that is not conducive to an environment where employees feel encouraged to raise concerns. Although no one interviewed said they would hesitate to bring a safety matter to the Chairman's attention, NRC senior executives and Commissioners provided specific examples of what they perceived as intimidating and bullying tactics by Chairman Jaczko so that they would be influenced to side with the Chairman's opinion despite their own judgments. The Chairman says he welcomes disagreement and challenges the staff for the good of the agency. However, many of the people who personally experienced or witnessed these interactions did not perceive these exchanges in a positive manner. The impact is that some senior officials avoid interactions with the Chairman and may limit what they tell the Chairman, which is contradictory to both NRC's values and an open and collaborative work environment."

A May 21st, 2012 [New York Times](#) story entitled, "Chairman of N.R.C. to Resign Under Fire," highlights the rocky tenure of the former NRC Chairman:

"Last year, all four of his [Jaczko] fellow commissioners — two Democrats and two Republicans — sent a letter to the White House chief of staff complaining about his management style. They told a House committee in December that Dr. Jaczko had withheld information from them, unprofessionally berated the agency's professional staff and reduced female employees to tears with his comments.

"But beyond friction with his fellow commissioners, he often found himself the lone dissenting vote on important issues. Among them were the speed with which American reactors should be reanalyzed and improved to incorporate the lessons learned from Fukushima Daiichi and whether licenses should be granted for new reactors before those changes were in the pipeline."

The Obama Administration's allies in the environmental and activist community have taken similar positions and have gone even further to express their opposition to nuclear power. Greenpeace published a February 2012 [document](#) declaring that:

"Renewable energy is a viable option for replacing the world's dirty, dangerous and terribly expensive nuclear reactors."

The Sierra Club has also come out against nuclear energy:

"Nuclear power is the most expensive and dangerous way ever devised to boil water. Radioactive materials generate heat to boil water to turn a turbine. The Sierra Club opposes building new nuclear power plants. They don't create air pollution, but they do create extremely dangerous radioactive waste that must be kept contained for thousands or even tens-of-thousands of years - something that many scientists say is impossible to do safely."

Nuclear power is crucial to America's energy mix, but radical environmental groups and their likeminded appointees in this Administration, will only continue to push to dramatically slow down and end this significant and viable form of energy.

The Importance of Nuclear–

- ***According to the Energy Information Administration, nuclear energy sources provided about 19% of total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation in 2011.***
- ***“Support for nuclear energy has grown over the past 25 years, according to public opinion polls conducted by Gallup, Pew Research Center, and Bisconti Research-Gfk Roper. These groups report that two of every three Americans now favor the use of nuclear energy and 80 percent of Americans agree that U.S. nuclear power plants are safe and secure.” - U.S. Department of Energy***
- ***“The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) projects the need for 40 to 50 large nuclear plants to be built and start operating within the next 20 years for nuclear to maintain or increase its present share of U.S. electricity supply. This is in addition to the current nuclear fleet, which must be safely maintained and updated.” - U.S. Department of Energy***

Beyond Wind: Blowing Away Opportunities



The Obama Administration has touted the development of renewable energy such as wind and solar energy from California all the way to the coast of the mid-Atlantic. During a 2010 visit to a wind turbine plant in Iowa, President Obama [praised the growth of wind power](#) and the promise it showed stating that:

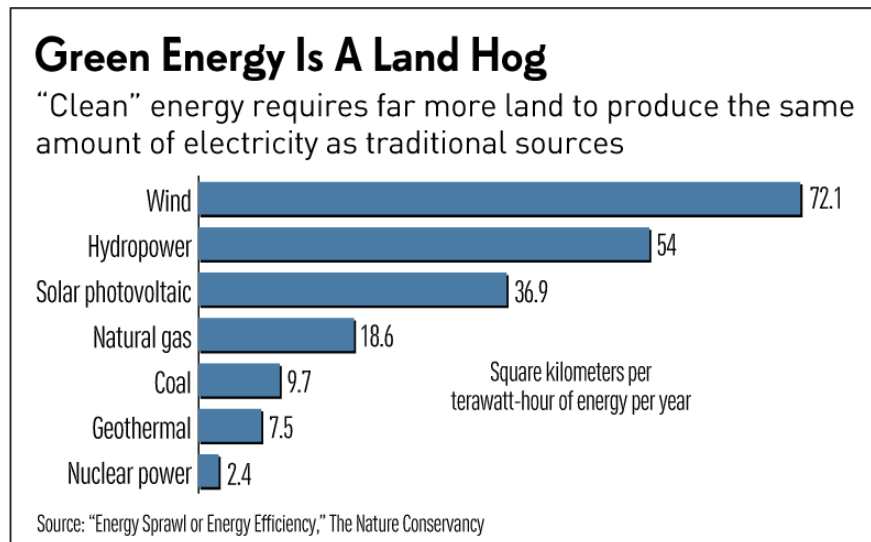
“Each new wind farm has the potential to create hundreds of construction jobs, and dozens of permanent local jobs in communities just like Fort Madison...And one study suggests that if we pursue our full potential for wind energy, and everything else goes right, wind could generate as much as 20 percent of America’s electricity 20 years from now.”

The federal government’s own [Energy Information Administration](#) (EIA) tells a different story. It projects that electricity generation from all renewable sources (including hydropower) will grow by 77 percent by 2035. Despite this growth, the total share of this generation will only increase from 10 percent to 15 percent during the same time frame. Once hydropower is taken out of EIA’s definition of renewable energy, the numbers are even smaller.

In addition, both his own Administration and countless liberal environmental groups have continued to push for red tape and have stalled wind and solar projects that have the potential to provide energy to all parts of the country. According to an August 10th, 2012 *Investor’s Business Daily* article entitled “Environmentalists Fight Solar, Wind, Renewable Energy – None-Of-The-Above Policy?”:

“But national and local environmental groups are fighting to block or delay many solar plants, wind farms, hydropower and biomass plants and other forms of ‘clean’ energy, along with the new transmission lines needed to bring that energy to consumers.”

Rather than develop these resources, they are choosing to focus on agendas that close off land to renewable energy development. Part of this can be explained by the fact that renewable energy sources such as wind are “land hog” energy sources that take up far more land than traditional sources of energy such as coal and natural gas. A chart in the same article points out this fact –



The China Mountain Wind project would include 170 turbines that have an estimated 425 megawatts of generating capacity. The project would encompass over 25,500 acres of federal land and 10,700 acres of state and private lands in south-central Idaho and northern Nevada. Instead of promoting this project, which would create hundreds of jobs, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has continued to defer and delay its progress in order to study the potential impact it could have the sage grouse population in the area. On March 8th, 2012, following years of study, the [BLM announced](#) that they would continue to impose delays:

“In consideration of our national sage-grouse interim management policy, we believe it wise to defer continued work on the project so that it can be considered in the context of, and informed by, the analyses and decisions in the Idaho Resource Management Plan revisions.”

Those hoping to develop wind energy on wind-rich federal lands continue to face sometimes insurmountable barriers constructed by the Administration. While we see states proactively working to develop onshore and offshore wind resources, we see this Administration working just as actively to stall projects.

In a [report](#) sponsored by the Department of Energy, Pacific Northwest Laboratories concluded that “constraints” are needed on the growth of wind energy development to protect the sage grouse, a bird whose [historical habitat](#) encompasses a majority of the wind-rich West. The organization stated:

*“Information on the local and landscape-level impacts of wind energy development on sage-grouse is needed so that effective mitigation measures and broad conservation strategies could then be developed as necessary. Mitigation measures could include **siting, construction, and operation constraints and guidelines.**”*

It is clear that the Obama Administration is facing increasing pressure from environmental groups to slow the development of this clean energy source in order to focus on its potential effects on species migration and habitat protection. In December of 2011, [90 environmental groups](#) led by the American Bird Conservancy, signed a [petition to the Fish and Wildlife Service](#) condemning the expansion of wind energy. The petition points out that:

“By 2020, it is expected that an exponential increase of wind turbines will kill at least one million birds each year, and impact almost 20,000 square miles of terrestrial bird habitat, and another 4,000 square miles of marine habitat.”

At the same time, despite assurances in the petition that the 90 groups support responsible development of wind energy where birds will not be negatively impacted, the petition also points out that:

“The reality is that migratory birds and wind turbines often tend to congregate in the same locations – corridors where strong winds blow.”

In April 2012, The Sierra Club [joined](#) the Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife in filing a federal lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management in opposition to the 100-turbine North Sky River wind project in California. Their spokesman, Barbara Boyle, summarized their organization’s stance on wind energy by stating:

“We’d like to see a lot more restrictions and fines and other kinds of consequences if an eagle or, God forbid, a condor, is killed by wind facilities.” – The Bakersfield Californian, April 19, 2012

The Importance of Wind –

- ***According to the [Energy Information Administration](#), renewable energy sources provided about 13% of total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation in 2011. Wind power accounted for 23% of that 13%.***
- ***“Today, the U.S. wind industry represents not only a large market for wind power capacity installations, but also a growing market for American manufacturing. Over 470 manufacturing facilities across the U.S. make components for wind turbines, and dedicated wind facilities that manufacture major components such as towers, blades and assembled nacelles can be found in every region.” - [The American Wind Energy Association](#)***
- ***“Wind energy is one of the lowest-priced renewable energy technologies available today, costing between 4 and 6 cents per kilowatt-hour, depending upon the wind resource and project financing of the particular project.” – [U.S. Department of Energy](#)***

Beyond Solar: A Clean Energy Future Eclipsed by Activists



On March 21st, 2012 [ABC News reported](#) President Obama speaking at a solar power plant in Boulder City, Nevada. The President said:

“Now you’d think, given this extraordinary sight, given the fact that this is creating jobs, generating power, helping to keep our environment clean, making us more competitive globally. You’d think that everybody would be supportive of solar power,

“And yet, if some politicians have their way, there won’t be any more public investment in solar energy.”

[The President went on to say:](#)

“When I took office...there wasn’t a single solar project in place on public lands—not one. Today, thanks to some great work by Ken Salazar, we’ve got 16 solar projects approved. And when they’re complete, we’ll be generating enough energy to power 2 million homes. And that’s progress.”

Once again, the President is overstating the potential electricity production from solar power. It projects that electricity generation from all renewable sources (including hydropower) will grow by 77 percent by 2035. Despite this growth, the total share of this generation will only increase from 10 percent to 15 percent during the same time frame. Once hydropower is taken out of EIA’s definition of renewable energy, the numbers for solar power are even smaller. Those projections also assume solar will continue to increase production without any unforeseen obstacles. However, since taking office, the Obama Administration’s record on solar energy has been marred by mismanagement, bad investments, and permitting delays that have stalled progress on solar energy production.

On May 7th, 2012, [Energy & Environment Daily](#) (E&E) published an article entitled “Salazar dedicates first commercial-scale solar plant on public lands.” The article points out that Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior, was attending the dedication of the nation’s **“first commercial-scale solar**

facility built on public lands.” The article went on to point out the woes facing the solar industry in the United States:

“The dedication comes as the solar industry struggles through bankruptcies, financing woes and the expiration of key federal tax incentives, among other challenges. Political support in Washington has also waned after the high-profile bankruptcies of Solyndra, the recipient of a half-billion-dollar federal loan guarantee, and Solar Trust of America, which had planned to build the nation’s largest solar plant on public lands in Southern California.

*“Although the Obama administration has approved nearly a dozen solar projects representing more than 4,500 MW since coming to office, **fewer than half the proposals have entered the construction phase**, according to Bureau of Land Management data obtained by E&E.”*

An increasing number of the President’s allies, including environmental groups, unions and Democratic senators have opposed and delayed developing solar power on public lands. A 2009 *Huffington Post* article entitled, “Feinstein Seeks to Block Solar Power from California Desert Land,” highlighted Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein’s attempt to delay and block solar power development on 500,000 acres of public lands in California. The article states:

“Nineteen companies have submitted applications to build solar or wind facilities on a parcel of 500,000 desert acres, but Sen. Dianne Feinstein said Friday such development would violate the spirit of what conservationists had intended when they donated much of the land to the public.

“Feinstein said Friday she intends to push legislation that would turn the land into a national monument, which would allow for existing uses to continue while preventing future development.”

A February 1st, 2011 article in the [Barstow Desert Dispatch](#) entitled, “Union group protests Kramer Junction solar project,” pointed out that there is union opposition to certain solar power plant proposals. The article states:

“A union group is fighting the approval of a proposed solar facility near Kramer Junction, saying that the project needs to provide further information about water usage and the impact it will have on the environment.

“Other proposed solar projects in the Mojave Desert have also had problems with labor unions who request more environmental conditions be met for solar projects.”

Most recently, [Defenders of Wildlife](#) posted on its website an April 4th, 2012 story entitled “CA Solar Farms: A ‘Right Way’ and a ‘Wrong Way.’”

In it, Kim Delfino, California Program Director for Defenders of Wildlife, stated her organization’s opposition to the Calico solar project in Barstow, California:

“Defenders of Wildlife, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club are filing a federal lawsuit in an attempt to stop the Calico project.”

It is clear that the Obama Administration has failed to rein in its own coalition with regards to solar development. The President has purported to support an energy source, but has let it fall short in the face of opposition from his allies and supporters.

The Importance of Solar –

- ***According to the Energy Information Administration, renewable energy sources provided about 13% of total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation in 2011. Solar power accounted for 1% of that 13%.***

- ***“With a cumulative installed capacity of over 4,460 MW, solar energy generates enough clean electricity to power over 661,000 average American homes.” - Solar Industries Association***

- ***Western states hardest hit by the economic recession have the biggest solar power potential, with New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado and California being the top five states for developing this important renewable energy. - Solar Industries Association***

Beyond Belief: Fighting for American Energy Security



It's time to turn American energy back on.

The energy crisis in America is solvable. Our country has the abundant natural resources and advanced technology to make our energy cleaner and more affordable. Most importantly, we have the manpower available and waiting to produce all of this energy. Unfortunately, the Administration and its environmental allies have continued to sabotage, whether intentionally or through incompetence, the production of nearly all American energy sources, including alternative sources like wind, solar and hydropower.

The President wagered our economic future on the growth of alternative American energy. In his first two full months in office, President Obama appointed a green jobs czar and passed an \$850 billion Stimulus Bill laden with alternative energy investments. What followed was a term full of bad investments like Solyndra and out of control Administrative agencies that have slowed energy development to a crawl. President Obama has spent over three and a half years crippling our energy sector, and our country has suffered enough. Unless we change these policies, the prospects of job creation and American energy security will not be realized. We must work to eliminate the bad investments, red tape, and regulations that are keeping American workers from developing these important energy resources.

The Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses support a plan that puts Americans back to work. Our proposals would level the playing field of regulatory red tape for all sources of energy, not just some. We have introduced bills that would cut red tape and expand American energy production on all fronts. We encourage the Administration to take a closer look at these proposals so that we can put Americans to work fighting for American energy independence. Here are just some of the proposals that Senate and Congressional Western Caucus members have introduced to help tackle the energy crisis:

The WEST Act, S. 2365: This bill is a compilation of pro-energy bills that have already passed the House of Representatives. It will stimulate domestic energy production on public lands and curb stringent environmental regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Hydropower Renewable Development Act of 2011, S. 631: This bill would include hydroelectric energy generated in the United States within the definition of “renewable energy” for the purposes of any federal program or standard. Hydropower is a clean and affordable renewable energy resource. It powers small and large business throughout the West, which keeps business costs low and jobs intact.

Utilizing America's Federal Lands for Wind Energy Act, H.R. 2172: This legislation would speed the production of clean American energy by streamlining the process to develop onshore wind power on Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands.

Employment Protection Act of 2011, S. 1292/H.R.1872: This bill would require EPA to analyze the impact on employment levels and economic activity, disaggregated by state, before promulgating any regulation or other requirement, issuing any policy statement, guidance document, endangerment finding, or denying any permit.

Defending America's Affordable Energy and Jobs Act, S.228/H.R. 750: This bill would pre-empt federal restrictions on greenhouse gases in the name of addressing climate change, in the absence of explicit Congressional authorization. This would necessarily include mandatory requirements that may stem from applications of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Offshore Energy and Jobs Permitting Act of 2011, S. 1226/H.R. 2012: This bill would eliminate confusion and uncertainty regarding the EPA's decision making process for air permits, which is delaying energy exploration throughout the country and specifically on Alaska's Outer Continental Shelf.

The Domestic Energy and Jobs Act, S. 3445: This bill would, among other things, streamline the leasing and permitting process for onshore natural gas production; open up new areas for offshore natural gas production; prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from issuing new regulations which would reduce American coal production; and facilitate the production of energy from solar, offshore wind, and tidal energy.