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Wind Energy: The Fuel of the Future Is Ready Today

Wind energy, the 1990s' fastest-growing energy source, is gaining attention worldwide because of its dramatically-improving technology and economics. Here are some of the reasons why wind is one of the best choices to power America into the next millennium:

Wind energy is **clean**: A single 750-kilowatt wind turbine, operated for one year at a site with Class 4 wind speeds (winds averaging 12.5-13.4 mph at 10 meters height), can be expected to displace a total of 1,179 tons (2.36 million pounds) of carbon dioxide, 6.9 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 4.3 tons of nitrogen oxides, based on the U.S. average utility generation fuel mix. More wind power means less smog, acid rain, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Wind energy **means jobs**: The highest wind energy resources in the U.S. are located in rural areas like the Great Plains. Wind energy brings jobs and income to revitalize rural communities and bolster farm incomes against bad weather. Worldwide, the wind and solar industries are likely to be one of the biggest sources of new manufacturing jobs in the next century.

Wind energy is **abundant**: With today's technology, wind energy could provide 20% of America's electricity (or about the amount nuclear power provides) with turbines installed on less than 1% of its land area. And within that area, less than 5% of the land would be occupied by wind equipment--the remaining 95% could continue to be used for farming or ranching.

Wind energy is **affordable**: Several U.S. utilities today offer their customers the option to purchase wind-generated electricity at a price premium of 2 to 2.5 cents/kWh. At that price, the average household could obtain 25% of its electricity from wind for \$4-5/month--and the cost of wind generation is continuing to decline.

Wind energy is **inexhaustible**: To generate the amount of electricity that America's wind resources could supply, 20 billion barrels of oil per year would be needed (that's nearly as much as the current entire world production of oil). But unlike oil fields, wind energy is renewable, year after year, forever.

Wind energy is **domestic**: It will never be subject to embargoes or "price shocks" caused by international conflicts.

Wind energy is **environmentally preferable**: Traditional energy sources carry a host of serious environmental baggage: air pollution and acid rain; the possibility of changing the earth's climate; radioactive waste disposal; oil spills; and more. Wind energy's environmental impacts are trivial in comparison.

Wind energy is **elegant**: Modern wind turbines are tall, graceful kinetic sculptures, visually striking and awe-inspiring.

