

Opinion

Letter: Wind energy deserves federal tax credits, too

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Wind energy deserves federal tax credits, too

I am writing in response to the Another Voice: “Congress should end the tax credit for production of wind energy.” Contrary to the claims of Thomas Pyle, whose group is funded by the fossil fuel billionaire Koch brothers, wind has received far less in tax credits and other government support than other energy sources. Its primary federal incentive, the Production Tax Credit, has been successful in attracting over \$100 billion to the U.S. economy since 2008 and increasing the amount of electricity provided by clean, affordable wind power in states such as New York.

The wind industry currently supports over 73,000 well-paying jobs. When the tax credit has expired in the past, it has cost the country up to 30,000 jobs. It has also led to a drop in wind projects, which provide economic benefits for surrounding communities through millions of dollars in added tax revenue that can be used to upgrade critical infrastructure such as roads, schools and emergency services. That is why polls regularly show that wide majorities of Republican, Democratic and independent voters support the tax credit, despite a well-funded campaign against it.

Seeking to deny the economic benefits, Pyle cites an industry-funded study about Spain’s support for renewable energy that the U.S. and the Spanish governments have rejected as extremely flawed. He also fearmongers about turning to cleaner energy sources, when in fact changes in wind are gradual and increasingly predictable, so it can be an important part of a diverse and reliable electric grid.

Unfortunately, Congress recently allowed the Production Tax Credit to expire once again, creating uncertainty for the wind industry while many other energy sources enjoy permanent tax incentives. Congress should rapidly extend the tax credit for the longest practical period to create a level playing field for wind power to keep scaling up, and let U.S. workers make more of our own energy right here at home.

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