

## **The Renewable Power Agenda; Common Sense, Politics and Greed**

I'm a regular old guy, a father, rancher and nature lover. I'm also a seventh generation Bastrop County native and a utility power professional. I would like to share my perspective with you all regarding the proposed solar field in Rosanky, located in southern Bastrop County, politics, and the state of the electric grid in Texas.

I'd like to start with the recent talk of a possible "Green New Deal". I realize presumed U.S. President Joe Biden is not totally on board with this agenda, but he does have his own version of it, calling for all electric generation in the U.S. to come from renewable sources by 2035. Let me begin by saying, this is impossible with the current technology of today. As of today in the ERCOT region, we have a mix of renewable and non-renewable generation. The renewables, mainly wind and solar, supplement the traditional gas, coal and nuclear generation. Although traditional generation units are needed and make up the backbone of ERCOT's generation resources, renewables — especially wind — make up a large portion. In fact on October 27, 2017 at 4 a.m., wind penetration reached a record 54% of ERCOT's total generation feeding customer load in real time.

### **Real Concerns with Renewable Generation**

With the increase in renewable generation, new challenges are arising to keep the lights on in Texas. Traditional generators have huge rotating shafts connected to the grid. This spinning mass working in unison is what keeps the lights on when one or more generators trip off-line due to mechanical problems, which is extremely common. When this happens, the other generators momentum keeps frequency from plummeting, giving enough time for generators to "ramp up" to cover for the generation that was lost. This feature is critically important for the reliability of the ERCOT interconnection. With out it, when a generator trips off-line, it could potentially create uncontrolled loss of load or a complete blackout. All ERCOT transmission operators are required to train on this scenario rigorously each year in order to keep their certification current. If this scenario ever played out, the lights would go out and stay out for weeks, even months. It wouldn't be pretty.

### **Electric Cancel Culture**

As traditional generators (nuclear, gas and coal fired) are being shut down, sometimes for no more than political reasons, the only generation being built are wind, solar and battery storage units, which are connected to the grid via inverter and offer no frequency support like I talked about in the above paragraph. Traditional generation units with spinning shafts who's future looks bleak, are no longer being built due to the renewable agenda of our politicians and the reliability of the ERCOT grid is beginning to suffer.

The cancel culture isn't reserved for Facebook, it's alive and well in every corner of our lives. The electric utility business is no different. Any electric utility professional who raises a concern publicly is looked upon like a complete idiot. I personally know of two ERCOT employees whom lost their jobs over raising reliability concerns; one was fired, one quit out of frustration. But what's ironic is that when these hypocrites get behind closed doors, they mock and laugh at this progressive agenda and acknowledge the serious concern.

### **The Real Price of Renewable Energy**

As I write this article, power is being sold onto the electric grid from generators at \$20.08 per mega watt hour. The City of Austin is buying power from Webber Solar (a 230 acre solar field in Webberville) at \$164 per mega watt hour. That's 8 times higher than what it's worth. The City of Austin has a 25 year contract with Webber Solar at this price. You can look this all up, it's open record. Renewable companies aren't stupid. Why sell power for what it's worth, when you can find a sucker? As the presidential election results loom, renewable generation companies are circling Austin like

buzzards eyeing a decaying corpse. The extra expense of this renewable generation is then passed off to customers. High tech companies like Data Foundry in South Austin are beginning to make their voices heard, appearing before the Texas Legislature and demanding something be done regarding Austin Energy's business practices, in order to lower their monthly bills. They see Austin Energy as abusing their role as a public power provider, instead of offering their customers the lowest possible prices. Austin Energy is a government entity and exempt from deregulation or customer choice of an electric provider. They are the electric monopoly in the area.

There are several human needs thought to be essential; electricity being one of them. If somehow Biden's renewable agenda really is carried out, normal people won't be able to afford their electric bills. Electricity will become like the other unaffordable essentials like healthcare and college tuition allowing for an easier sell of socialism in our country from left wing politicians.

### **I'm in the wrong business**

As I hear about RWE Solar lobbying for a 100% tax break I laugh. How dumb are we? The federal government in the year 2021 is already offering a 22% tax credit. Essentially, they will be tax free.

So just to recap:

- RWE will most likely sign a contract with Austin Energy to sell them power for 8 times what it's actually worth.
- Pay zero taxes
- Bulldoze 2,000 acres of rural land in southern Bastrop County, burn the trees, and cover it with glass panels (Doesn't sound green to me).
- De-value land prices adjacent to the site

Are you thinking what I'm thinking? I'm in the wrong business! Good luck to the grass roots effort of the small group of southern Bastrop residents opposed to the Rosanky solar project. You've got my vote.