

Choices, Choices, Wyoming's Energy Mix

Opinion A

Electricity comes from many different resources. Some resources can be replaced, and others cannot. A resource that can be replaced is called renewable. Wind and solar are examples of renewable resources. This is the best way for us to get our electricity. These resources are found all over the world. People who live away from powerlines and cities have used these energy resources for decades. They used windmills and solar panels to help pump water for livestock. Even in the city, people can use solar panels on their houses to provide power.

Renewable energy doesn't run out! Each day the sun comes up and gives us energy. The sun's energy also powers the wind and water cycle. As we use these renewables, they keep coming back and always will.

Wind turbines and solar panels don't produce air and water pollution. This is healthy for people, animals, and the environment. Wind and solar are great renewable resources for us to get electricity from.



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Opinion B

Renewable energy resources can generate a lot of electricity for Wyoming, but they have some issues. The first deals with maintenance, which means being able to fix or help keep something in a good condition, so it lasts longer and stays safe. Infrastructure (the equipment that gets the generated electricity to people's homes) still needs to be built for wind and solar power plants. This is a complicated and costly process. Since solar energy depends on the sun, and wind turbines need wind to move, the electricity generated by these methods is not always reliable. People want electricity when they want to use it. That is not always possible with renewables, unless storage systems are available. Unfortunately, right now, the technology does not exist to best store the electricity from renewable resources. Because of these of reasons, renewable energy can cost more for people to use on daily basis.

Another negative is the environmental impact. Wyoming is known for wide open land, beautiful landscapes, and wildlife. Renewable energy needs a lot of land and space in order to produce electricity. With these large structures, this negatively affects Wyoming's landscape by disrupting the natural beauty of the land. These structures also have an impact on birds and bats by causing their deaths when the animals encounter them. Though renewables do offer benefits, one cannot ignore the challenges involved with using them.



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Opinion C

Wyoming is very fortunate to have many nonrenewable energy resources available in our state. These energy resources include: coal, oil, natural gas, and uranium. These extraction industries provide many high-paying jobs. 40% of our nation's coal comes from Wyoming. This coal provides electricity that is affordable, and burning Wyoming coal is cleaner for our environment. Coal also makes many other products that are used on a daily basis. Wyoming has an abundance of coal which is stored all over the state. Uranium is another Wyoming resource. It is the fuel that nuclear power plants use to generate electricity without harmful air pollution. Finally, Wyoming contains massive oil reserves. Oil is the energy resource that allows us to power our vehicles and is the basis of multiple products we use everyday.

In Wyoming, we have long, cold winters and hot summers. Natural gas is the energy resource that keeps houses warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Come rain or shine, these resources consistently generate electricity for people to use when they want it. A few other positive effects are that all of these energy resources create many well-paying jobs for Wyoming citizens. Taxes from these energy resources provide funding for our schools. Even though nonrenewable resources do not regenerate quickly, they are a great benefit to Wyoming.



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Opinion D

The end is NEAR! Well, maybe not that near, but it is getting closer. Every year, we use millions of tons of fossil fuels and other nonrenewable resources to make electricity. With each shovel burnt, we approach the extinction of fossil fuels. Wyoming's vast and cheap fields of coal took millions of years to form. Nature can't make more quickly. Fossil fuel extraction provides lots of jobs when the market price for them is high. However, when the market price drops a bust cycle begins. The jobs are gone, and bustling communities become ghost towns since the people leave to find new jobs. Plus, when we use it up, what will we do? What will the next generation of people do? They won't have coal, oil, or natural gas to make electricity, tires, or other products we use everyday.

This is not just a future problem; what will we do with the effects from burning these fuels today? Burning fossil fuels produces pollution. Mining coal displaces large areas of land and disturbs plant and animal habitats. If mining companies don't reclaim their land, it can leave scars on the landscape. Oil spills from wells and pipelines have polluted oceans and waterways. Waste from nuclear power plants remains dangerous for centuries after the electricity is gone. Even though nonrenewable resources give us cheap, stable power now, will they always in the future?



