

# The Washington Post

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## Why wind power has a bright future

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Wise policy decisions about energy sources will follow from comparing the costs and benefits of options in various locations [[“Squall on Md. wind farm plan worsens,”](#) Metro, Jan. 9]. Let’s compare the economic and health benefits of developing an alternative energy source — offshore wind power for Maryland — to the costs and risks of trying to maintain the status quo, mainly, burning fossil fuels.

Let’s also avoid inaccurate groupings. Opponents of wind energy lump together the offshore wind option with problems in California’s solar industry. The technology and financing are not the same. Offshore wind energy is a proven technology; Europe has been generating wind power for two decades and has nearly 1,300 turbines off its coasts.

As for financing, the federal government has provided more than a half-trillion dollars in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry since 1950. Despite this, the Maryland Energy Administration says that Maryland energy prices roughly doubled from 1999 to 2009. An offshore wind renewable energy credit will not guarantee a profit for developers, what with possible cost overruns. But the credit will guarantee a stable 20-year price for energy as a hedge against volatile fossil fuel markets. Developing a moderate-size offshore wind park will also save billions by reducing premature deaths, childhood asthma and emergency-room visits linked to poor air quality.

**Steven Sellers Lapham, Gaithersburg**



The article on the wind farm plan emphasized the costs of Gov. Martin O’Malley’s offshore wind bill, but it left out the vast rewards of a 500-megawatt clean-energy source. By weaning our energy system off coal just a bit, we can prevent many premature, pollution-caused deaths and significantly cut our health-care costs. As if this wasn’t enough of a moral reason to support this bill, wouldn’t it be nice to



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rely on an energy resource that isn't destined to fizzle out? As a college student, I'm concerned that too many people are stuck on the short-term rewards and not enough people are focused on the long term.

**Thalia Patrinos, Baltimore**

The writer is a member of the Maryland Student Climate Coalition.

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