

Thank you, Governor Snyder for caring enough about Michigan and her people to commit to improving our energy systems.

The first question you ask on your Michigan energy web page is “What information do Michigan energy policy makers need to consider in order to make good energy decisions?”

I would say that the most important consideration is how our decisions will effect our grandchildren and their grandchildren. The greatest benefit we can give them is to move rapidly from fossil fuel energy to renewable energy.

Another important consideration is how we are affected in the present. Today, burning coal to generate our electricity showers our state with mercury, uranium and other heavy metals and pollutants. We and our children suffer physically with more asthma and other breathing disorders, more birth defects, and more of other various diseases. We also suffer economically because we have to buy coal from other states. 1.7 billion dollars leaves our state annually. We could use that money to create jobs and strengthen our economy. But, no, we send it to Montana and other places, to enrich their economies.

If we continue with business as usual, we, as well as future generations will pay continually higher energy prices. Our grandchildren will experience more health problems from the pollution. And they will experience, or at least witness, a huge amount of human suffering due to climate change. Our scientists are convinced that climate change is being caused by our pollution. They are as sure of it as they are sure that smoking causes cancer.

Besides benefiting their health, converting to renewables will also be a tremendous economic benefit to our children. After the initial investment is made, the energy is free. What a magnificent gift we can give to our children: clean, cheap energy resulting in increased health and economic prosperity.

So we can continue to burn fossil fuels making ourselves and our children less healthy and more poor, or we can transition to renewables. How do we make the transition?

We don't have to invent the wheel here. Germany has essentially the same cloudy climate as we do and they lead the world in photovoltaic solar energy. They require their electric companies to pay a fair price for solar electricity. This makes it possible for ordinary people to become solar entrepreneurs. Ordinary people can invest in a personal or neighborhood solar project and know that over a ten year contract their investment will be repaid. After that, they make a modest profit and continue providing clean, safe electricity. Over the long term that solar electricity is cheaper than coal electricity, so the consumers also win.

Germany has also invested in wind. In a calm month, one quarter of northern Germany's electric needs are provided by wind. In a windy month, it is half. Michigan has a good wind resource on land and a tremendously good wind resource off shore in the Great

Lakes. Imagine producing all the electricity we need and having plenty extra to sell to other states. Imagine us powering the city of Chicago while turning a healthy profit. It can happen if we exploit this great natural resource. But we have to get there first. Wisconsin, Illinois and other states also have Great Lakes wind available to them. Ohio has already started offshore wind development, so if we don't act quickly, other states will take our jobs and our prosperity.

The technical groundwork for offshore wind has already been done. The best spots for wind turbines have already been identified. 565 square miles where the wind is strong, the water is shallow, outside of shipping lanes, where wildlife will not be endangered, where the fishing industry will not be impacted. On a map you can see that these areas are only a tiny portion of our Great Lakes. This work was completed by the Michigan Great Lakes Wind Council in 2010.

In summary, we can have the imagination and the courage to do what is best for our grandchildren and ourselves, or we can continue in the old ways, poisoning our land, water and air, and doing irreparable harm to our children.

Thank you again Governor Snyder,

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