

Washington Meets Holland

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The US Government has announced a virtual end to electricity shortages for the entire American east coast. Thanks to a new construction project undertaken by the Office of Energy Policy, the city of Washington, DC, will soon be producing in excess of 18 TRILLION TERA-WATTS of electricity per day! This phenomenal output will be more than sufficient to power every electrical appliance – from the light in your bathroom to the giant air conditioners that cool the Empire State Building -- from Maine to Florida, with plenty left over, at approximately .05 cents per customer annually! And that's just the beginning!

James MacGyver, spokesperson for the Office of Energy Policy, said that once the effectiveness of this program, dubbed the WOW (Windmills Over Washington) Project, has been demonstrated he expects to see it emulated in every capitol city in the US. Soon, Tallahassee, Anaheim, Austin, Harrisburg, Bismarck, and other cities will be home to their own wind turbines.

The secret to this remarkable and innovative project is, strangely enough, politics. While wind turbines have been shown to be a practical and low pollution means of generating electricity, they have a major flaw – they need enough wind. In many parts of the country this has limited the usefulness of turbine technology, necessitating siting wind farms on mountains or flatlands where sensitive biospheres may be negatively impacted by the tall towers and incipient maintenance activities. The answer to this quandary was right in front of us all along: pick the windiest places we can find and put turbines there. But where were the strongest winds in the country?

“It just makes sense to use the one resource we’ve got too darn much of,” said Gladys Hecklebridge, 91, of Georgetown, a suburb of Washington, DC. Ms. Hecklebridge is credited with the concept on which the WOW Project is based. “When one bunch of those knuckleheads starts ‘filibustering’ at the other it can get mighty windy around here,” she said. “Why, during the Clinton Impeachment <debates> it got so windy that it wasn’t safe to walk your dog during the day. I saw small trees snapped and big oaks uprooted, and my neighbor’s garage blew over like a house of cards. Right then I knew we were wasting the most plentiful thing we had – political windbag hot air!”

“When one bunch of those knuckleheads starts filibustering at the other it can get mighty windy around here.” Gladys Hecklebridge

“We’re very concerned, of course. This is an accident waiting to happen,” warned Tabitha Clay-Briggs-Talmidge, spokesperson for AWFUL (Against Windmills Fouling Urban Landscapes), which fears the turbines will endanger and inconvenience citizens, as well as birds, in the city. “These things are behemoths,” Clay-Briggs-Talmidge cautioned, “hundreds of feet tall and with huge, spinning blades. Perhaps they’d be okay in a rural setting where nobody will be hurt when something goes wrong, but not in a city full of people. I mean, suppose Congress should take up some really divisive issue – gay marriages or abortion or something like that – the increase in wind power could blow all 18

towers clear across the state. If just one of those blades snaps off it would become a flying missile aimed at our very hearts!”

“Of course, we had to make some modifications to the turbine’s basic design,” said Darnell Jefferson, head designer on the WOW Project’s R&D team. “Turbines are designed to handle very heavy winds, but they have their limits. They’re just not designed to withstand the incredible gusting that occurs on an almost daily basis in Washington, at least whenever Congress is in session. If a really controversial issue comes up in the



Artist’s rendition of one of the 18 modified wind turbines to be constructed in Washington DC this year.

Senate the wind shear force is almost beyond calculation. We had to make improvements to allow for that kind of stress to the blades, towers, every component of the mechanism.”

“**It had to happen eventually,**” claims Jadreel Mukarjee, assistant to Senator Bovine Effluvia (D OR), who sponsored the bill. “You just can’t have an ultra-powerful resource lying around without somebody eventually saying, ‘Hey, we can use that.’ It’s like a river – how long can a river flow without somebody putting a waterwheel on it or damming it for hydropower? And once Senator Effluvia saw Ms. Hecklebridge’s proposal and realized the potential of it all – the unlimited, unending, entirely free, constant gale-force winds continually blasting out of the Senate and House and the White House and Pentagon...well, there was just no way to ignore the goldmine we had here.”

While officially supportive of the WOW Project, President Rossman Learned was reportedly slow to embrace the idea of placing turbines, which he considers “an eyesore” around the capitol city. While he has not issued a statement on the subject, and although he did sign the bill authorizing and funding WOW in spite of negative bipartisan Congressional reaction, it is known that in the past he opposed an effort to place similar turbines around his home in Massachusetts. Then a state Senator, Learned vigorously opposed windpower, saying the turbines would endanger migrating birds and populations of a threatened species of bat, defiling the natural landscape and “fouling this pristine biosphere,” as well as annoying human inhabitants with the noise turbines create. His detractors, however, noted at that time that Senator Learned was unconcerned with the wind farms peppering much of his state until one was proposed where it would have interfered with his estate’s view of the ocean.



Two turbines are already under construction on the US Capitol building, and four more are planned in order to take full advantage of the unending blasts of hot air that are an everyday occurrence there.



Artist’s rendition of the two wind turbines planned for the White House.

Two turbines are already being built in Washington as part of the US Capitol building and are projected to be finished late this summer. Four more turbines are to be added to that site, considered the windiest hunk of ground in the entire country, in the coming year. Their completion is being delayed while engineers study how much additional strengthening the turbine blades will need to endure the regular hurricane force gales of super-heated air that are common at that location. Another pair of turbine towers is slated for the White House, although that project may be postponed so long as President Learned is living there. Vice-President Schwarzenegger has voiced enthusiastic support for siting wind turbines at the President’s residence