Combatting Climate Change Through Regulatory Relief

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The problem

Emissions from electricity generation lead to disproportionate number of premature deaths for some racial groups

Sarah McQuate
UW News
The solution: rapid renewable energy deployment


https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/when-will-electric-cars-go-mainstream/

Barriers to the solution

Traditional electric utility regulation and balkanized grids

https://www.ferc.gov/industries/electric/indus-act/rto.asp
“Deregulated” (restructured) wholesale energy markets on regional grids have been a key driver of renewable energy development.
Barriers to the solution

Community and NGO opposition

Non-climate environmental impacts


Community impacts

https://www.ledgertranscript.com/First-Antrim-Wind-turbines-go-up-26835518
After years of debate, Antrim Wind project now visible

The view from the Antrim Town Beach shows turbines for the Antrim Wind project going up. Courtesy
Race Preview: New Hampshire is a competitive state that leans Democratic in presidential elections. Mrs. Clinton has a slight advantage to pick up its four electoral votes. Barack Obama won New Hampshire in 2012 by 5.6 percentage points.
Local bans, moratoria, permit denials

- San Bernardino County, California
- Linn County, Kansas
- Perquimans County, North Carolina
- Woodland, North Carolina
- Lewiston, New York
Barriers to the solution

Federal and state regulation, litigation

Cape Wind proposed 2002.


Project abandoned 2017.

De-regulation and regulatory streamlining

Exemption and preemption

See, e.g., oil and gas:

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
Safe Drinking Water Act
Extensive local preemption
Pre-selection and review of sites

“Smart from the Start” on federal lands

Proposed in New York: “Build-ready” projects; sites competitively auctioned

California’s Natural Community Conservation Planning

https://www.fws.gov/ecological-services/energy-development/solar.html
Agency collaboration or consolidation

BLM and Oregon Wind MOU
New York’s proposed Office of Renewable Energy Permitting
California’s Renewable Energy Action Team

Time limits for regulatory determinations

Applicant support from agency officials or ombudsmen
Streamlining must be done cautiously

Environmental justice and just transitions—need for new regulations

Potential for entrenching suboptimal infrastructure

https://www.fws.gov/ecological-services/energy-development/electric-transmission.html