



Report on Wind Resource Garners Attention from Press, Skepticism from Experts

Wind industry and scientific experts reacted skeptically this week to suggestions reported in an Associated Press story that the nation's wind resource may be weakening slightly as a result of global warming.

The story focused on a soon-to-be released study indicating that wind speeds may have slowed by as much as 10% in some parts of the country. The possibility of reduced wind resources is something the industry has been aware of, with the topic even having been touched on at AWEA wind resource events. Both industry experts and scientists emphasize that the evidence is far from clear that there will be a decrease in wind speed going forward; in fact, some models and observations even suggest a possible increase in wind resource. In short, much uncertainty surrounds the issue, but empirical evidence and theory does seem to support the conclusion that climate change will slightly reduce overall wind speeds, although the effect will vary a great deal from one wind site to another.

Even if there is a decrease in wind speed in the future at some wind farm sites and potential sites, many sites in every region of the country are likely to see increased wind speeds, say industry experts. With wind resource affecting profit margins, it is common practice within the industry to assess historical wind data over periods of up to 30 years.

Another possible reason to take the report with a grain of salt: even if wind speeds are generally decreasing, there inevitably will remain far more good wind sites than would be needed to supply all of the nation's energy needs. According to Black & Veatch, there are over 8,000 gigawatts of available land-based wind resources that the industry estimates can be captured economically.

A third-party expert look at the study and the related story is available in a June 11 posting on the [RealClimate](#) blog.

Source: Wind Energy Weekly, 12 June 2009