

Title: Towards a New Wind Energy Promotion Policy

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The ownership and operation of large wind turbines for community supply should be a service provided by the local public authorities; like the supply of water, central district heating, public transport and other parts of the public infrastructure. We can learn from the past 100 years of practice that the state should promote public regulation in favour of local and collective ownership of basic public services, such as energy. This non-capitalist approach is in line with the protection and promotion of the common good in most democratic societies. Considering the size of order and complexity of the transition to 100% RES-based energy system, and its urgency, it is only realistic for public administrations to undertake this task.

Wind energy should be a part of the public planning with expropriation of the necessary areas for wind turbines, as it is done with power pylons, waterworks and similar areas of public interest. It is already standard practice to provide monetary compensation when areas are being designated for the common good, this should also be the case in the wind energy sector. Legislation must regulate that expropriated areas can only be used for locally public owned wind turbines. This would be a decisive contribution for attaining local acceptance and make wind energy more competitive. For instance, in Denmark it could lead to a 50% cost reduction.

The legislation must also instruct utilities to buy the electricity from wind turbines at a price determined by the government and guaranteed for a minimum of 20 years. Such laws are used in the most successful wind energy countries. Electricity from wind turbines will be part of the mix of electricity from different suppliers. All consumers will pay for the electricity from the wind turbines that in this way would not require subsidies.

The state must identify the potential in every municipality and point out what kind of development is possible. Profits from selling wind turbine electricity to utilities should be put in a municipal fund with the clause that it has to be used for energy savings in public buildings and similar projects for the common good. This would be a serious incentive for the municipalities to actively be a part of the development with renewable energy either through municipal companies or existing and eventually new local RE supply companies that can supply a full RE package including wind power.

In addition, there should be space for individual wind turbine ownership for self-supply. There must be a political framework regarding the conditions for renewable energy at homes, agriculture, industry etc. Offshore plants require their own conditions due to the high demand for investments, particularly with regards to grid connection. When grid connection is assured, it has been proven in practice that off-shore projects can also be implemented in a community ownership framework.

By making the establishment and operation of large wind turbines the responsibility of public supply companies, there will be huge savings due to cheaper areas for wind turbines, saved repowering fees and cheaper long term financing. This will make wind energy more attractive for the individual municipality as well as at a national level. This would also improve supply security, steady energy prices and secure the fulfilment of international agreements concerning CO2 reduction.

This idea is quickly finding a strong resonance and support at the local level in Denmark, where liberalised wind energy policies are provoking protests at the local level. It therefore has the potential to break the deadlock in the installation of new capacity in Denmark.