

Comments on Rune's Letter

On November 11, 2008, Neil Reynolds wrote an opinion piece originally linked at <http://www.wind-watch.org/news/2008/07/11/wind-turbine-marketers-are-full-of-hot-air/> in the Globe & Mail entitled "*Wind Turbine Marketers are Full of Hot Air*". There were lots of comments including a rebuttal, saved at http://windfarmrealities.org/wfr-docs/rune_letter.pdf from the Danish Wind Industry, as published by the Danish consulate in Ottawa. I found the rebuttal had some good points but I'd mentioned there were some problems with it as well, and I thought I should in fairness specify what those problems were. The italicized parts are from the Danish rebuttal, with my comments interspersed in regular type.

Danish power consumers receive a substantial economic benefit from the turbines because the turbines reduce the market price of power.

From what base? They still pay among the highest rates in Europe, almost triple what Canadians pay.

In periods with high wind speeds the turbines produce at full capacity thus lowering the marked price for the consumers.

That is normally at night, when domestic use is low and most of the power is exported to Norway etc. I'm not sure how that reduces the market price.

It is claimed by Mr. Reynolds that only 3.3 pct of the power from turbines is accepted by the grid and that 84 pct is exported. This is simply nonsense.

Reynolds got his numbers from a British study, so I can't verify them, but typically this "fact" is created by studying the export numbers and comparing them with the domestic consumption numbers. I think that is a valid technique, hardly nonsense.

... the optimal thing to do in periods with high wind power production would be to turn down the fossil power production.

I agree and I think everyone in the world would agree. Do they actually do so? Why not? If you look at the actual emission numbers the Danish record isn't very impressive.

... the Danish TSO makes a substantial profit every year on this cross border trade with wind power.

I'd like to see the actual numbers on this. My understanding is that the exports are at low-use times (generally at night), and thus are at low prices, while the imports are at high-use times (generally at day) and thus more expensive. What is not mentioned is the total picture, i.e. are these profits at the expense of the Danish ratepayer?

Not a single CO2-emitting power plant has been closed since the introduction of wind in Denmark, claims Reynolds. Not true, 5 power plants have been closed from 1982 until present time. Since 1997 alone 18 pct of the installed conventional capacity has been decommissioned.

I'd be curious why 1982 was picked, as wind wasn't installed in any great amount until the early 90's. Plus he doesn't mention if any new ones were commissioned. Denmark has made a major conversion from conventional coal power plants to CHG and gas plants over the last several decades, in addition to adding all the wind turbines. The 1997 number is more interesting. I'd like to know why it was decommissioned, what exactly constitutes "conventional capacity", and what it was replaced with. His wording makes me wonder.

A modern turbine uses approximately 15,000 kWh/year.

If true, and I have no good reason to doubt it, this was the most valuable nugget of this rebuttal.