

WBR ARTICLE

Wind energy potential huge

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The potential energy available from onshore wind in the United States has been found to be nearly 37,000,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh), more than nine times the current total U.S. energy consumption.

Earlier this month, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the principal research laboratory for the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, released a new assessment of the potential for wind power within the United States.

The assessment, the first comprehensive update of the wind energy potential by state since 1993, lists the potential capacity of onshore wind resources in the U.S. as being over 10,000 gigawatts (GW). The U.S. is barely tapping this vast resource: according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), current installed wind power capacity is just 35 GW in the U.S. and 158 GW worldwide.

In Wyoming – the eighth windiest state in the nation - the new total wind energy potential is estimated to be 1,994,340 GWh, up from 747,000 GWh.

The larger estimates do not mean that the nation is getting windier, but that the technology to measure and capture wind power is getting better. Newer, taller wind turbines are tapping into better wind at higher elevations, and means of measuring wind has become more refined.

The new wind energy numbers are available at:

http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/filter_detail.asp?itemid=2542