



Renewable Energy Powers Colorado Economic Growth

Renewable Energy in Colorado:

- **Colorado Wind:** 2,324 megawatts, 10th in the nation, powers 800,000 homes
- **Colorado Solar:** 314 megawatts, 7th in the nation, powers 56,500 homes
- **In 2013:** Xcel Energy, Black Hills, Tri-State, and Platte River Power Authority each issued requests for proposals in Colorado for new renewable energy resources to lock in very competitive prices.

Jobs and Economic Benefits for Coloradans:

- **Rural job growth:** Colorado's renewable energy companies employ nearly 10,000 workers.¹ Utility-scale wind and solar projects are typically located in rural areas. For example, Tri-State's three utility-scale renewable energy projects have been located in member co-ops' service territories.
- **Payments to landowners:** \$7.5 million in lease payments are made each year to Colorado farmers, ranchers, and landowners who host wind turbines on their land.²

Renewables Increase Energy Security and Reduce Costs:

- **Reduce price spikes:** Clean energy hedges against future price spikes and instability in fossil fuel prices. Under traditional fossil fuel contracts the "fuel risk" is borne by ratepayers (i.e., if natural gas prices go up, rates go up), but there are no similar fuel price spikes associated with renewables.
- **Save consumers' money:** Xcel Energy is one of the nation's largest purchasers of wind, going beyond the Colorado RES requirements due to cost savings from its wind investments. In a 2011 regulatory filing seeking commission approval to acquire the Limon II wind project, Xcel testified: **"We view this wind project [Limon II] as providing substantial net savings to our company and our customers as early as 2014."** (PUC Docket No. 11A-869E)
- **Historic low prices:** David Eves, CEO of Public Service Company of Colorado, told the *Denver Business Journal*: **"This is the first time that we've seen, purely on a price basis, that the solar projects made the cut – without considering carbon costs or the need to comply with a renewable energy standard – strictly on an economic basis."** Quoted when Xcel Energy committed to buy 450 megawatts of wind and 170 megawatts of solar based on low prices alone.

Environmental Benefits:

- **Water Savings:** Colorado saves almost 1.5 billion gallons per year of water consumption by generating electricity with wind versus other sources.
- **Clean Air:** in Colorado, over 4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually are avoided each year by wind energy, which is like taking more than 715,000 cars off the road.

¹ American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), State Wind Energy Statistics: Colorado, available at <http://www.awea.org/Resources/state.aspx?ItemNumber=5233> and Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), State Solar Policy: Colorado, available at <http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/colorado>.

² AWEA, State Wind Energy Statistics: Colorado, available at <http://www.awea.org/Resources/state.aspx?ItemNumber=5233>.