Thank you for your comment, Jeffrey Twine.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarM60167.

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First Name: Jeffrey
Middle Initial: M
Last Name: Twine
Organization: Synerjy
Address: 325 Riverside Drive #64
Address 2:
Address 3:
City: New York
State: NY
Zip: 10025
Country: USA
Email:
Privacy Preference: Don't withhold name or address from public record
Attachment:

Comment Submitted:

I fully support the Solar Energy Study Areas, but, rather than making specific comments on it I'm submitting an abstract of a renewable energy plan that I've devised.
This plan is somewhat more ambitious and comprehensive. The text is attached:

Renewable Energy Parks System

Much of the land to the west and south of the Rocky Mountains (over 400,000 square miles) is too dry for agriculture. Even where there is sufficient rainfall farmers are being paid not to farm over 35 million acres (about 55,000 square miles) and many other farmers are just barely eking out a living. There are at least 500,000 square miles of underutilized land in the land to the west of the Mississippi alone, and much more in in Alaska and the eastern states. It would be a win-win situation if we used energy parks to make these open spaces more productive, lessen our dangerous dependence on imported fuels, reduce the amount of climate-altering carbon dioxide we spew into the atmosphere and create jobs at the same time.

We need to achieve economies of scale to make renewable cost competitive with fossil-fuel electricity or fuels. This can be achieved, in part, by the creation of large-scale energy parks that would produce electricity or fuels (and perhaps both at the same site) from wind power, solar electric technologies and biomass. The potential is enormous: If just 1/10 of the above-mentioned underutilized land was used for energy parks (50,000 square miles) we could produce about 600,000 Megawatts of electricity from just wind power and considerably more if large arrays of photovoltaic cells were interspersed between the wind turbines. Alternatively, if biomass appropriate to the region was grown between the turbines on within solar-thermal-electric plants, we could use the electricity to help produce transportation fuels. These open-space energy parks, together with a real commitment to energy conservation, would allow us come much closer to energy independence. All eyes are now on the USA; we need to take the lead in renewable energy, and this would be a great example for other countries to follow.

State or federal energy parks might work best as a joint public/private enterprise – the land being bought or leased by the government and the energy production facilities built and operated by private entrepreneurs such as wind farm developers. Corporate sponsorship would be helpful. All parties, including state or federal governments, could share in any resultant profits.

The ideal situation would be one in which the energy parks are sited in under-utilized land fairly close to a city—to minimize transmission costs. It must be pointed out however, that most of the energy transmission infrastructure is in dire need of replacement or upgrading. It would be wise to take renewable energy —and renewable energy parks—into account when this upgrade or replacement is done.

A long-term objective would be the development of a national or state energy park system similar to the current system of national and state parks which are designed to protect the environment.