



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published February 15, 2008

Steven Zinn: Michigan has huge energy potential

Steven Zinn

lives in Vestaburg.

How does renewable energy affect Michigan's future? Renewable energy can be found in sources such as solar, wind, corn, and waste products. Michigan has an abundance of all these.

Solar power has been around for more than 100 years, but because of the abundance of fossil fuels, it was not taken seriously enough until the oil shortages of the 1970s. Electricity can be generated using photo voltaic cells. A portion of this research is being done at Hemlock Semiconductor in central Michigan. The prices for these cells have declined an average 4 percent over the last 15 years.

The energy in the wind has been harnessed for several years now in the Western states. In the San Gorgonio Mountain Pass near Palm Springs Calif., you will find wind farms along U.S. 10.

These farms have an excess of 4,000 wind turbines. Each of these turbines can generate an average of 300 kilowatts an hour; enough to power one house for a month. These generators can cost upwards of \$300,000. They are not owned by one company; however several companies and individuals have invested in them.

Corn is being refined into ethanol to reduce emissions and the cost of gasoline at the pump. According to www.cleanairchoice.org, the pump price of E85 is from 30 to 90 cents less than unleaded fuels per gallon. One such plant is under construction in Ithaca. One of the by-products of this fuel is high protein feed for livestock, since not all the corn is used.

Coal may not be one of the renewable resources, yet it is one of the most abundant sources of fuel the United States has in its reserves. According to Americans for Balanced Energy Choices, we have more coal reserves in the United States than the world has oil. Until now, this fuel source has been used without regard to the impact on our ecosystem. Research has brought us to the point where coal can be utilized in a clean and cost effective manner.

Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle is a technology that has been in development for a several years. According to GE, the environmental benefits of IGCC will reduce the cost of electricity by avoiding emissions credit costs. The emissions are 33 percent to 90 percent lower than a comparable Supercritical Pulverized Clean Coal plant equipped with state-of-the-art emissions control equipment.

IGCC is a proposed project in Gratiot County.

These are all ways for Michigan to becoming the world leader in renewable fuels. Michigan has everything it needs except, the proper legislation in place. We must have the right laws in place to encourage new companies to come to Michigan and build on our future.

The permit process needs to be shortened to speed up our recovery. Legislation should not favor Consumers Energy or DTE, but open the doors to new business.

Is House Bill 5524 the answer?

Copyright 2008 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)