Plenty of wind in Utah

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Topic Letters

I was pleased to read the Daily Herald's support for renewable energy development in Utah.

Wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal sources can indeed diversify Utah's energy resource portfolio to ease demand on price-volatile natural gas.

The editorial, however, gave the wrong impression that large-scale wind development was not feasible for Utah. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory has issued an updated wind resource map for Utah, showing approximately 5,000 megawatts of potential wind capacity in Utah (see www.wind.utah.gov).

Of those potential megawatts, the Utah Energy Office believes that there are close to 1,000 megawatts (a megawatt can power between 350-450 homes) of harvestable, cost-effective wind.

Prime locations include the northwestern corner of Utah (northwest of the Great Salt Lake), the west-central area primarily in Millard County, the Wasatch Plateau and ridges to the west of Price, and the southwestern corner of Utah (west of St. George). Indeed, Utah has some excellent "pockets of wind," which could provide more than 13 percent of Utah's electricity with current technology.

Wind development could boost economic development in Utah's rural communities devastated by drought and keep Utah's energy dollars in Utah rather than on projects in other states.

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