

I've written before about how [fossil fuel industries have a strong incentive to kill \(or at least stop the rise of\) renewable energy now, so that it doesn't become a powerful political force](#). If renewable energy does become a strong enough political force, then there is a risk that it might provide support for ending the various subsidies for fossil fuels and the imposition of more stringent environmental regulations that will make coal in particular less and less competitive economically. I've written previously about how [this dynamic played out in California and was likely a significant factor in voters rejecting efforts to repeal California's landmark climate change bill, AB 32](#).

Here's another example of the efforts by fossil-fuel industries to obstruct the growth of renewable energy. President Obama [has nominated Ronald J. Binz to head the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission \(FERC\)](#). Mr. Binz led efforts in Colorado to accelerate renewable energy development; FERC has a major role in overseeing interstate electricity markets. At the very least, FERC can make it very difficult for states such as California to support the growth of their renewable energy industries, and FERC can take active steps to help the growth of renewable energy, like encouraging the construction of interstate transmission lines needed to ramp up the growth of renewable energy.

So of course the coal industry has attacked Mr. Binz's nomination, [calling him "anti-coal."](#) No surprise given the political dynamics that I've outlined above. Let's hope that the Administration sticks with Mr. Binz.