

You might find this a bit surprising, but wind power has a solid political base in key Republican states. It's a case of economics outweighing politics. [Here](#) are the top five states for wind power:

<i>Rank</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Installed Capacity*</i>
1	Texas	20,320
2	Iowa	6,911
3	Oklahoma	6,645
4	California	5,656
5	Kansas	4451

*In megawatts.

You might not have expected to see the four deep-Red States on this list. But there's a geographic reason they're on the list: the corridor that runs from West Texas all the way up the Dakotas where winds are strongest. It's no wonder that wind power is a big deal in the states along the corridor.

Wind power generation is continuing to grow in those high-wind states. [Midwestern Energy News](#) reports:

“Wind power represents more than 80 percent of the new electricity generating capacity built in the Midwest and Great Plains states over the past five years as the industry continues to grow. . .

“The American Wind Energy Association's annual 2016 report notes that two states in the region generate more than 30 percent of their electricity needs from wind - Iowa (35 percent) and South Dakota (30 percent). North Dakota, Oklahoma and Kansas produce more than 20 percent of their electricity demand from wind.

“Not surprising, the Midwest/Great Plains nexus - combined with Texas — captured 89 percent of all investment in wind last year.

“For instance, in July, two corporations [announced](#) “they’re building a 2,000-megawatt wind project in the Oklahoma panhandle, which, upon completion, could hold the title of second-largest wind farm in the world.”

Unless you’re in the industry or live in or near those states, the importance of wind power on the Great Plains may not seem to have much to do with your life. But it makes a real difference in terms of energy politics. Here are the [words](#) of no less a personage than Senator James Inhofe, Climate Denier and Fossil Fuel Advocate *Extraordinaire*:

“I also agree . . . that wind energy must play an increasing role in our nation’s energy future. With 689 megawatts (MW) of production, Oklahoma ranks as one of the top states in wind energy production. To help spur wind development in Oklahoma, I worked to include a provision in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) to increase private sector investment in high voltage lines by decreasing the depreciation period for these lines to 15 years.”

Or consider Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa. During the campaign, he [said](#) that if Trump wanted to do away with wind power, “he’ll have to get a bill through Congress, and he’ll do it over my dead body.” Grassley sponsored the original tax credit law for wind power, and he came out hard against a draft report by Trump’s Department of Energy that was allegedly anti-wind. Not to [mention](#) Sam Brownback, who led Kansas in its failed experiment with rightwing governance:

“Speaking at the American Council on Renewable Energy’s (ACORE) recent Renewable Energy Finance Forum, Gov. Brownback said he believes generating half of Kansas’s electricity using wind is ‘doable’ and he expects it to happen. He noted that Kanas is ‘going to be aggressively recruiting and working with [wind] companies,’ and working on transmission build-out to better enable the wind industry to grow even faster.”

These are important, mostly hard-line conservative politicians. If you’re Mitch McConnell or Paul Ryan – or for that matter, the Secretary of Energy – you can’t afford to ignore the views of Republicans like these. That’s why I feel comfortable saying, despite Trump’s personal antipathy toward wind power, that it will not only survive his administration but continue to grow.

