

4-16-2010

## Mexico inaugurates two wind-powered facilities in Oaxaca state

SourceMex writers

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/la\\_energy\\_notien](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/la_energy_notien)

---

### Recommended Citation

SourceMex writers. "Mexico inaugurates two wind-powered facilities in Oaxaca state." (2010). [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/la\\_energy\\_notien/126](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/la_energy_notien/126)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin American Energy Policy, Regulation and Dialogue at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiEn: An Analytical Digest About Energy Issues in Latin America by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

## **MEXICO INAUGURATES TWO WIND-POWERED FACILITIES IN OAXACA STATE**

Federal authorities have begun strong efforts to promote alternative energy in Mexico, with some of the initial focus on developing wind-powered electricity. Two new wind-powered electrical facilities were inaugurated in Oaxaca state in mid-January, as part of a long-term project to develop this type of energy in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Some local authorities are also becoming involved in promoting and developing alternative energy, with the city of Toluca planning to launch the first phase of the Parque Ecologico Cacalomacan in March. The facility will produce energy from both solar and wind power.

### **Plants provide power for private companies**

The two new wind farms at La Ventosa, near the coastal community of Juchitan de Zaragoza in Oaxaca state, were developed to supply electricity to the private sector. The two facilities were inaugurated on the same date, with President Felipe Calderon on hand to mark the occasion.

The larger of the two facilities, constructed by Spain-based energy company Acciona Energia, is expected to supply about 250 megawatts of electricity to Mexico's giant cement manufacturer CEMEX by the end of 2009.

CEMEX chief executive officer Lorenzo Zambrano said the wind-powered plant, known as the Eurus project, would eventually account for 25% of the electricity used by CEMEX at the domestic level. The switch to wind power, said Zambrano, will help CEMEX reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide by 600,000 metric tons a year.

Spokespersons at Acciona Energia said the Eurus wind farm is the largest of its kind in Latin America, with its output sufficient to power a city with a population of about 500,000 inhabitants.

A second plant, constructed by Spanish company Iberdrola at a cost of US\$170 million, will have the capacity to produce about 80 MW of electricity. A permit approved by the Comision Reguladora de Energia (CRE) indicates the facility will supply electrical energy to such companies as Barcel, Bimbo, Apasco, Cerveceria Cuauhtemoc-Moctezuma, Conductores Monterrey, Crisoba, Dal-Tile de Mexico, Kimberly Clark de Mexico, Lala, Prolec, Proeza, Zinc Nacional, and some retail operations of the Soriana and HEB chains.

The Calderon administration hopes that the two facilities will serve as a prototype for other projects, including plants for state-run utilities to distribute electrical power to residential customers.

Energy Secretary Georgina Kessel said the government is targeting production of wind-powered electricity at 2,500 MW by 2012. At present, wind power accounts for less than 100 MW of Mexico's installed electrical capacity of 50,000 MW.

But most projects are likely to be constructed in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. "Prospects for wind-related energy are varied in Mexico," Eduardo Rincon, secretary of the Asociacion Nacional de Energia Solar (ANES), said at a forum on alternative energy. "For example, there are places where the wind is extremely good, such as the coasts of Oaxaca, especially the Isthmus

of Tehuantepec. But there are other areas where wind is not sufficient and where large projects cannot be viable."

### **Calderon promotes environmental benefits of alternative energy**

Calderon said Mexico would continue to place a strong emphasis on developing alternative energy to reduce carbon emissions. "If we don't do something about this problem of climate change, it probably could become--I'm sure it already is--one of the biggest threats to humanity," the president said at the inauguration ceremony at La Ventosa.

Calderon emphasized that the projects are a clear example of how a government can protect the environment while promoting projects that will foment prosperity. "Projects like this one show that this concept is possible," said Calderon.

But the effort to develop the wind farms has not been without controversy, with environmental advocates raising concerns about the potential damage to wildlife in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The project has also been the target of protests by local communal farm dwellers and Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN). Protestors accused multinational companies of attempting to exploit the resources of indigenous communities while not giving them anything in return (see [SourceMex, 2006-08-16](#)).

While the protests were generally muted at the inauguration of the facilities, there is still local resistance to the project. "Foreign companies are investing in wind-energy projects in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, but some of these projects are opposed by local land dwellers who refuse to sell their lands or are asking a much higher price," the Mexico City daily newspaper Reforma said in early January.

According to Reforma, five of the 17 projects planned between 2008 and 2011 are facing legal challenges.

### **Toluca unveils wind-solar project at tourist facility**

The concept of alternative energy is also reaching the local level. Municipal authorities in Toluca are planning to invest about 2 million pesos (US\$142,000) to install a windmill and solar panels to power most facilities at the Parque Ecologico Cacalomacan. The first phase of the project will be launched in March.

"The energy generated will supply electricity to several cabins," said Mayor Juan Rodolfo Sanchez. "We have not yet decided what we're going to do with our excess energy." Local authorities want to take the concept beyond the ecological park, which could serve as an example for the citizens of Toluca. "We are hoping that people will start to become familiar with these types of renewable energy," said Ana Romo, environmental coordinator for the city of Toluca. "This is a small effort that seeks to promote environmental education through projects that are tangible and real."

Rincon said locations such as Toluca need both solar and wind energy because wind speeds are often variable. "In Toluca, the problem is that some days we have adequate winds of 5 meters per second and other days we have no wind at all," said the ANES expert. [Note: Peso-dollar conversions in this article are based on the Interbank rate in effect on February 28, 2009, reported at 14.03 pesos per US\$1.00.]

[Sources: El Universal, Reuters, Dow Jones news service, 01/22/09; Reforma, 01/05/09, 01/19/09, 01/21/09, 01/23/09; Associated Press, 01/22/09, 01/23/09; Notimex, Excelsior, El Sol de Mexico, La Jornada, 01/23/09]

