Colorado is a national leader in the wind energy industry. There are at least 15 manufacturing facilities in Colorado creating high quality jobs and producing components for the wind industry, including global companies such as wind turbine manufacturer Vestas and steel producer O’Neal Steel. Thanks to companies like these, Colorado ranks fourth in the nation for wind industry employment. Colorado has expanded its wind portfolio and currently generates over 17% of its electricity from wind power. Xcel Energy is currently developing the 600 MW Rush Creek Wind Project, which will inject $1 billion into the economy.

Jobs & Economic
An investment in wind power is an investment in jobs, including jobs in operations and maintenance, construction, manufacturing and many support sectors. In addition, wind projects produce lease payments for landowners and increase the tax base of communities.

- 2016 direct and indirect jobs supported: 6,001 to 7,000
- Total capital investment through 2016: $5.9 billion
- Annual land lease payments: $5-10 million

Wind-Related Manufacturing
The United States has over 500 manufacturing facilities producing products for the wind industry that range from blade, tower and turbine nacelle assembly facilities to raw component suppliers, including fiberglass and steel.

- Number of active manufacturing facilities in the state: 15
Wind Projects

- **Installed wind capacity**: 3,026 MW
- **State rank for installed wind capacity**: 10th
- **Number of wind turbines**: 1,913
- **State rank for number of wind turbines**: 8th
- **Wind projects online**: 25 (Projects above 10 MW: 17)
- **Wind capacity under construction**: 76 MW
- **Wind capacity in advanced development**: 600 MW

Current Wind Generation

During 2016, wind energy provided 17.33% of all in-state electricity production.
- **Equivalent number of homes powered by wind**: 871,000

Wind Generation Potential

The DOE Wind Vision Scenario projects that Colorado could produce enough wind energy by 2030 to power the equivalent of 670,000 average American homes.
- **Land based technical wind potential at 80 m hub height**: 274,353 MW
- **Land based technical wind potential at 110 m hub height**: 262,878 MW (Source: NREL)

Environmental Benefits

Generating wind power creates no emissions and uses virtually no water.
- **2016 annual state water consumption savings**:* 5.0 billion gallons
- **2016 equivalent number of water bottles saved**: 38.2 billion
- **2016 annual state carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions avoided**: 9.3 million metric tons
- **2016 equivalent cars worth of emissions avoided**: 2.0 million

*Based on national average water consumption factors for coal and gas plants

Renewable Portfolio Standard

The Colorado Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requires investor-owned utilities to provide 30% of their 2020 electricity through renewable energy, large cooperatives (>100,000 customers) to provide 20%, and small cooperatives (<100,000 customers) and municipalities to provide 10%. Wind energy has historically been the renewable resource of choice to meet RPS requirements in Colorado.