

 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**  
**ALTERNATIVE ENERGY:  
BE CAREFUL WHAT  
YOU DEMAND!**

By Stephen L. Bakke  July 12, 2015



*Here's what provoked me:*

*We seek ideal solutions to energy and environmental challenges and often think we've discovered "just the thing." Well, not so fast! We always need to find out "the rest of the story"! That's the best advice I can give writers and analysts ... and just plain citizens who jump onto bandwagons without thoroughly checking them all out!*

*Here's my response:*

**Alternative Energy: Be careful what you demand!**

Ron Smiley is charged up about solar energy as an energy solution ("Bondi wrong in stopping solar"– July 11). He's incensed that Florida requires that energy be purchased from a utility. He's championing the cause of an interesting group called Floridians for Solar Choice.

While Smiley is particularly enthused about solar energy for individual use, the real question for most citizens is much larger. One of Florida's energy problems is that in the last 10 years, the number of coal fired units has been reduced from 30 to about a dozen (numbers are approximate). That energy must be replaced, and many consider solar as the ideal solution. However, so far, much replacement of coal energy has been from cheap and clean natural gas. Smiley wouldn't approve.

Setting aside cost and other considerations, there are adverse affects to production of solar energy that aren't usually considered. Space doesn't permit a technical explanation, but the WSJ reported on a recent Brookings Institution study which "estimated that replacing coal with modern combined-cycle gas turbines cuts 2.6 times more carbon-dioxide emissions than using wind does, and cuts four times as many emissions as solar."

Let's be careful what we wish for and even demand!