

Alternative Energy Sources

The MAT Board of Directors support decommissioning guidelines for solar photovoltaic module panels and wind turbine blades. The growing industry directly impacts people of Minnesota and throughout the country.

Solar

While we acknowledge that solar can be a viable resource it also can be a burden on the lands if adequate guidelines are not in place. The focus to expedite green energy has overshadowed the crucial need for an environmentally safe decommissioning process including storing and eventual recycling of solar panels at the end of their useful life. Due to natural weather disasters, the thousands of contaminated solar panels are directed into our landfills years before the intended life span. At this time, there is no uniform recycling program established and the disposal of such panels have created a new problem that we are unprepared to handle.

Wind

While the open lands of MN are filled with the winds of change so is it filling our soils with the spoils of aged wind turbine blades. We are very concerned that without finding a way to recycle the thousands of blades which have already expired in usefulness, the advantages of wind energy are compromised as the spent blades are brought into landfill areas.

We as stewards of the land, air and water need a better understanding of the potential negative long term effects of these sources of energy as decommissioning guidelines are being considered. Identifying problems and seeking the solutions for environmental impact with input from regulatory agencies, legislators, local units of government and land owners should help to ensure that essential aspects are addressed. The collaborative effort may help to expedite sound decommissioning practices.