

Impacts of alternative energy sources on the environment in jamaica

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Impacts of Alternative energy sources on the Environment in Jamaica Over centuries, ensuring environmental sustainability has been a major concern to all. However, global warming associated with various sources of energy has become a controversial issue in the society. In order to reduce cases of global warming, people have opted in using alternative sources of energy. It is important to note that the search for safer, cleaner, cheaper, more reliable sources of energy and effective ways of using it binds together countries all over the world, rich and poor, large and small. Jamaica is depicted as one of the countries with great need of renewable energy to reduce emissions of green house gases. However, obstacles pave the entire struggles of implementing renewable energy within the electricity mix and energy in Jamaica (Edenhofer, 2011). The need for renewable energy in Jamaica remains an issue of debate with its promulgation far from achievement. Despite Jamaica's need for renewable energy, importantly, there are both pessimistic and optimistic impacts of using these alternative sources of energy. This paper therefore identifies some of the positive and negative impacts of alternative forms of energy in terms of their environmental impacts and feasibility for implementation in Jamaica. One of the main optimistic impacts of using and implementing alternative sources of energy in Jamaica is production of energy that will not only diversify its energy supply, reduce its dependence on non-renewable fossil fuels, reduce the country's import energy bill but also contribute immensely on the emission of greenhouse gases. Moreover, the use of these alternative sources of energy results to a reduction in global warming associated with climate

change and its subsequent adverse effects on the environment such as degradation or bleaching of coral reefs, beach erosion, aquatic life, and other natural ecosystems that habit the coast (Afgan & Carvalho, 2007). The deployment, implementation, and wide-scale use of renewable energy source that emit fewer gas emissions becomes essential in reducing pollution and consequent associated health problems. This ensures a healthy country. In addition, the thrust for using alternative sources of energy portray an economic growth to the society. Arguably, many new job opportunities erupt by invention and innovation of new power plants required to exploit these sources of energy. This not only provides income for individual citizens in the country but also increase the country's economic income. Stimulation and implementation of the use of alternative energy sources in the country necessitates more viability and profitability (Strachan & Vigilance, 2011). Although many economic bonuses lay a basis upon these alternative energy technologies, various countries and market sectors become negatively affected. Alternative energy poses more advantage on the environment over fossil fuels and nuclear power though with subsequent risks associated (Lokey, 2012). Even though no pollution is associated with some of these technologies, environmental effects upon animals and plants can be severe. One of the disadvantages of using alternative energy sources is the detrimental survival of bat and birds species. Scholarly research depicts that most of the birds have a tendency to fly within the blades of wind turbines. This poses great harm to their survival since it is approximated that 20 wind turbines in a farm may lead to the death of about 4, 000 birds and bats thus ultimately piloting to the extinction of some of the

bird and bat species . Further, the wind turbines contribute to noise pollution by the much noise they produce (Mason, 2009). Use of hydroelectric power on the other hand may be disadvantageous in that the power plants need to be constructed near water bodies in order to retrieve energy from water waves. This ultimately destroys plant and animal habitat. Moreover, the modification of the landscape may lead to suction of marine life and wildlife inside the machine thus reducing the population levels. Unforeseen runoff due to land modifications may lead to excess floods and land degradation leading to desertification. The use of geothermal energy as an alternative source of energy can pose negative impact to the environment. Gases emitted from underground can contribute to destruction of the ozone layer and continuous growth of green house gases. Some of the gases produced cause planetary reflection thus leading to atmospheric cooling. In addition, since geothermal power plants produce a lot of heat, they require a lot of water for cooling and this may lead to diminution of the water resources available (Lokey, 2012). In conclusion, environmental sustainability is the dream of every nation. There is need for the implementation of the use of alternative energy sources than the fossil fuels in Jamaica since the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It will be of more importance to put more efforts in the use of renewable sources of energy since it provides an opportunity for improvement of Jamaica's economy, environment, and the society. However, partnership is the driver for good governance between private entities and public sector, and hence commitment and renewable energy policy is vital for its implementation (Strachan & Vigilance, 2011).

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