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U.S. 'Winding' Down in 2010, China Takes Global Lead



By [Cheryl Kaftan](#)
[TMcnet Contributor](#)

China added more new wind power installations in 2010 than any other country, leaving the USA in second place, according to the World Wind Energy Report. The United States added 5.6 gigawatts (GW) of wind power capacity, compared to China's 18.9 GW—and China reached a total installed capacity of 44.7 megawatts (MW), compared to the U.S. wind industry's 40.2 MW.



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To give these numbers perspective, 40.2 megawatts of electricity would be enough to power approximately 10 million homes, according to the Washington, D.C.-based [American Wind Energy Association](#) (AWEA). That figure only represents 2 percent of all energy produced in the United States, but in a recent [statement](#), the Association noted that America's wind power industry grew by 15 percent in 2010 and provided 26 percent of all new electric generating capacity in the United States.

"The American [wind industry](#) is delivering, despite competing with energy sectors that have permanent government subsidies in place," said Denise Bode, CEO of the AWEA. "Wind is consistently performing," she said, "adding 35 percent of all new generating capacity since 2007—that's twice what coal and nuclear added combined."

What's more there have been questions about how much of China's capacity actually is "installed." Last week, in a joint statement of the Shanghai-based [Chinese Wind Energy Association](#) (CWEA) and the Bonn, Germany-based [World Wind Energy Association](#) (WWEA) the number was clarified.

"The installed capacity of 44.7 GW includes turbines [that] have been grid-connected and are delivering electricity, even if they have not yet completed the commissioning and acceptance procedure, which can take several months," said Qin Haiyan, secretary general of CWEA. "This explains the much-reported 'gap' between installation and grid connection which is often reported from China. In other markets, it is common practice to include all turbines as soon as they are grid-connected and producing electricity." According to [Bloomberg New Energy Finance](#), China's growth in installed capacity was driven by a record level of investment in wind power, which exceeded \$20 billion in 2009. In the third quarter of 2010, China's investment in new wind power projects accounted for half of the global total.

To confound the issue a bit more, the World Wind Energy Report also looks at wind

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power installations in relation to the population of a country/region: by these parameters, Denmark has by far the highest amount of installed capacity per person (675 kilowatts per person), followed by Spain (.442 kW/person), Portugal (.344 kW/person) and Germany (.334 kW/person).

And where do the United States and China fall on this list? World leader China only lands on place 27 (0,033 kW/person), while the United States is perched at number 9 (.128 kW/person).

Finally, the outlook is "windy" for the next year: Wind turbine installations may rise 20 percent worldwide in 2011 over 294.4 GW at the end of 2010 worldwide and double by 2015, according to the [Global Wind Energy Council](#), an industry trade association headquartered in Brussels. By 2015, it projects 450 gigawatts.

The GWEC [forecasts](#) that "Multiple factors contribute to a more favorable outlook for wind energy growth in the United States in 2011. The sector finished 2010 with a strong fourth quarter with 3,195 MW of new installations, and entered the new year with over 5,600 MW under construction. This is above construction activity at the same time in 2009, and given such indicators, the industry could finish 2011 well ahead of 2010 numbers."

Cheryl Kaftan is an accomplished communicator who has written for consumer and corporate audiences. She has worked extensively for MasterCard ([News - Alert](#)) Worldwide, Philip Morris USA (Altria), and KPMG, and has consulted for Estee Lauder and the Philadelphia Inquirer Newspapers. To read more of her articles, please visit her [columnist page](#).

Edited by [Jennifer Russell](#)



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