

The Floating Wind Turbines of Japan



Floating wind turbines or nuclear devastation?



The Japanese people have made a pretty clear choice. [70% oppose nuclear power](#). So, where do you go from there? Well, one amazingly promising option is to build out wind power. (Why have the Japanese waited so long to deploy renewables? It's a big question. Maybe the answer is the power of the nuclear energy lobby and the utilities. That's certainly what has been holding France back.)

But the story here is wind: The NY Times reported [here](#) the other day that Tokyo University researchers reckon that "...wind in deeper waters off Japan could generate as much as 1,570

gigawatts of electricity, roughly eight times the current capacity of all of Japan's power companies combined..." [I wrote in August](#) of a study that said that offshore wind could provide four times Europe's needs.

One striking similarity in both of these projections is that **floating** turbines are the key to these enormous numbers for power capacity. The [Global Wind Energy Council](#) predicts that we'll have about 536 gigawatts of installed capacity in wind by 2017. That will be just about 10% of total global installed capacity in all forms of electricity production. The potential for floating turbines, operating in deep waters where the wind is stronger and more consistent than inshore or onshore, is, as we're seeing from these analyses, enormous. Even the usually conservative International Energy Agency sees wind generating as much as [18% of global electric power](#) by 2050. I think it will be much more.

In Japan, a consortium of industrial concerns with a worldwide presence, such as Marubeni, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, and others, see [this project](#) as a critical way to claim their share of the burgeoning market in renewables. Godspeed.

The story of offshore wind is told [here](#), eloquently, by analysts like Michael Liebreich, founder of [Bloomberg New Energy Finance](#).