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Letters to the Editor

By Times-Dispatch Staff

Franken-energy can't survive on its own

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" is considered one of the first examples of science-fiction literature. Today, "franken-energy" — more commonly known as renewable energy — and large-scale, financially self-sustaining, renewable energy projects are modern-day examples of science-fiction.

Frankenstein's creation received its life-force via lightning. Franken-energy receives its life-force via political mandates and taxpayer funding. Shelly's monster needed recharges from the skies; renewable energy needs financial recharges from the government — it withers away if left to survive on its own. The monster has spawned some 37,000 job dependants, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

Ongoing attempts by trade groups and politicians to persuade Congress to renew the life-sustaining Production Tax Credit for wind power demonstrate that this creation is not cost-effective, and otherwise unable to survive. Decades of taxpayer funding have not produced viable offspring; success is repeatedly just another federal subsidy-cycle away.

Like a Frankenstein monster, the wind-turbine monster flays out blindly at birds, killing hundreds of thousands yearly. It scars the beauty of mountain tops, consumes vast quantities of natural resources, requires rest time and provides useful work a fraction of the time.

Frankenstein's creation met its fate at the hands of an outraged mob. The franken-energy is falling victim to enraged taxpayers, but it has friends in high places. President Barack Obama and Gov. Bob McDonnell include it in their "all of the above" energy menus. McDonnell upped the ante by dedicating \$500,000 for research and development in Virginia Wind Energy, even as

Spanish wind-power giant Gamesa scrapped plans to build a wind-turbine test facility in Chesapeake Bay.

Fate has provided the Franken-energy creation with its own namesake protector. Minnesota Sen. Al Franken is a leading advocate.

Charles Battig,

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Charlottesville.