



When it went online in 2014, the [Ivanpah Solar Power Facility](#) in California’s Mojave Desert was the largest solar facility on Earth. The plant, which features three 459-foot towers and thousands of computer-controlled mirrors known as heliostats, cost some \$2.2 billion to build.

When it closes next year, some [13 years ahead of schedule](#), the victim of newer, less expensive, and more efficient technology, the lost investment of the \$2.2 billion, (\$1.6 billion in federal loan guarantees) will dwarf the other failed, high-profile Green New Deal initiative, Solyndra, which went bankrupt in 2011; that California project taking \$535 billion of taxpayer money with it. The U.S. Department of Energy funded both projects during the Obama Administration.



*Photo of Ivanpah facility courtesy of NY Post*

“Ivanpah stands as a testament to the waste and inefficiency of government-subsidized energy schemes,” Jason Isaac, CEO of the American Energy Institute, an American energy advocacy group, told Fox News via statement this past February. It “[never lived up to its promises](#), producing less electricity than expected, while relying on natural gas to stay operational.”

The “concentrating solar power project” uses mirrors to focus the sun’s energy onto three towers where water is heated, producing steam that spins a turbine to generate electricity.

In addition to being expensive and inefficient by today’s standards, it was deadly to birds, according to the [Association of Avian Veterinarians](#). Some 6,000 winged creatures were killed *each year* by flying into the sun’s rays as they were reflected upon the towers.

“It simply did not scale up,” said Edward Smeloff, an alternative energy consultant. “It’s kind of an obsolete technology [that’s] been outpaced by [solar photovoltaic technology](#).”

“The Ivanpah plant was a financial boondoggle and environmental disaster,” Julia Dowell of the Sierra Club, an environmental activism group, said of the power plant.

## **Ivanpah lessons for Kansas**

Kansas has two large-scale solar projects; [Johnson Corner](#) near Johnson City, and [Kansas Sky Energy](#) in Douglas County. A third, [Jeffrey Solar](#) is planned for Jackson County. None is directly financed with federal money, although tax credits are a possibility for investors.

What can Kansas learn from the high-profile California failures?

We asked Virginia Macha, a land rights organizer from Iola for her perspective:

“Ivanpah Solar Project should be a lesson to Kansas, as well as the midwestern states, that are presently delivering as much as 40% to 60% of renewable energy to coastal states. States like California have regulated fossil fuels (base load or reliable energy) out of business. East and West Coast states are adopting energy standards that embrace renewable energy, which has proven to be unreliable as a sole source of energy, causing a plethora of problems for neighboring states that have always regarded energy policy with a balanced approach.

“Midwestern states such as Kansas and Colorado are facing millions of acres of prime farm ground being repurposed from agriculture to industrial energy with no regard to the environment, property rights of adjoining land owners, and impacting local government budgets when 10-year abatements are used. Along with these impacts will follow problems like transmission of the energy. The states, counties, and cities will have no say, power, or influence over federal regulators who represent the special interest of for-profit transmission owners when siting for transmission lines. These are the issues, along with eminent domain powers given to the for-profit transmission companies who have taken large swaths of property with blanket easements.

“One such case in Barton County is the Rosewood Ranch, a service provider for a developmentally challenged population, being taken for a 700kV(kilovolt)-HVDC (high voltage DC power lines) transmission that doesn’t serve Kansas. The irony is that local rate payers are on the hook to pay for transmission construction according to the “Highway-Byway” policies of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ([FERC](#)), even when the energy is not intended to be used by the rate payers.

“How could California dismantle a “Crown Jewel” like the Ivanpah Solar Project in the Mojave Desert when the “100% Renewable Energy” goal must be maintained? California is looking to the Midwest states, where land is ample and property owner rights are weak, knowing that subsidies like Transferable, Untraceable, and Non-Taxed Credits worth trillions will be incentive enough to make that solution a reality for California.

“What is the worth of land to Kansas politicians and regulators that seem to turn a deaf ear to the public outcries for help when their rights are being trampled? Their inactions tells the story.

“As for the future outlook of Kansas, Colorado, and other midwestern state property owners, consider it is “Game On.” Home Rule is in the crosshairs, as well as the continual anointing of unelected, regional commissions who enforce policies that undermine freedom itself. The encouraging note is that “standing up” is occurring more every day and freedom or loss of freedom is worth the fight.”