

*NOTE TO MEDIA: LeClairRyan energy attorney Roy M. Palk is available to comment on alternative energy issues.*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Growth Prospects for U.S. Alternative Energy Are Strong,  
LeClairRyan's Roy M. Palk Says**

*--Powerful market forces support the further adoption of solar, wind, biogas and more, says veteran energy attorney in interview with online magazine focused on alternative energy.*

GLEN ALLEN, Va. (5/16/17)—Despite Trump administration rollbacks of fossil-fuel regulations, the fast-growing U.S. alternative energy sector is not about to be eclipsed by more traditional forms of power production, said veteran LeClairRyan energy attorney Roy M. Palk in an April 27 Q&A with [altenergymag.com](http://altenergymag.com).

“Alternative energy is no longer a novelty,” Palk told editor Bob Hetherington. “It is being driven these days, not so much by political agendas and idealism, but by powerful market forces.”

The interview with Palk, the national law firm’s Glen Allen, Va.-based Senior Energy Industry Advisor, touched on an array of topics related to regulations and the growth of the alternative energy industry in the United States.

Asked how the political winds could affect alternative energy, Palk predicted that federal regulatory rollbacks will shift activity to the states. “Plenty of states still desire to be very active in clean energy and are moving forward with incentives and regulations,” he said. “We’re not just seeing this in states like California, New York and New Jersey. In fact, even states like Kentucky—coal country, after all—are moving forward with alternative energy.”

Palk, former CEO of the East Kentucky Power Cooperative, noted that Kentucky utilities are decisively ramping up their solar energy programs. “Believe it or not, the Kentucky Coal Museum in Benham has just installed an initial 50 solar panels on its roof and is aiming for an eventual capacity of 60-kilowatts,” he said in the interview. “I had to smile when I read that.”

As Palk sees it, the reason is simple enough: “Costs are going down for equipment and installation because technology is becoming more standardized and getting better all the time,” he told Hetherington.

Along the same lines, he said in the interview, it is unlikely that coal will make a big comeback as some have hoped. If coal comes back to any degree, Palk explained, it is going to do so according to a very different model than what we have seen in the past. “When most Americans think of coal, they envision Appalachian towns where well-paid miners bravely risk their lives to go deep underground and recover coal with pickaxes,” he said. “But remember, there’s a lot less coal in the Appalachians today than in decades past, and it’s a lot more expensive to mine coal in those traditional coal regions as well.”

Any growth that does occur in the coal sector, Palk noted in the interview, will likely occur in the Midwest and West in open fields where coal is close to the surface, bountiful, and easy and cheap to mine. “These will be largely automated operations,” he said. “The real job growth, as far as the energy sector is concerned, will be in alternatives and renewables, and I don’t see coal in any way putting the brakes on alternative energy in the years to come.”

The interview also touched on how reduced regulation of methane could actually help certain forms of alternative energy, such as biogas; the limitations of so-called “clean coal”; how improvements in battery

storage stand to make solar and wind energy more stable; and the role of scientific development in U.S. energy.

The full column is available at

<http://www.altenergymag.com/article/2017/04/regulations-and-alternative-energy-industry-growth-in-the-usa/26079>

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As a trusted advisor, LeClairRyan provides business counsel and client representation in corporate law and litigation. In this role, the firm applies its knowledge, insight and skill to help clients achieve their business objectives while managing and minimizing their legal risks, difficulties and expenses. With offices from coast to coast, the firm represents a wide variety of clients nationwide. For more information about LeClairRyan, visit [www.leclairryan.com](http://www.leclairryan.com).

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