Wind Farms in Iowa – Collin Baker

My favorite part of this project was the leaflet map. The layers perfectly complemented each other while following the subject matter. I thought the use of buttons to zoom to different locations on the map made a lot of sense and helped me visualize good locations for wind turbines. Also, you found some really good data! Overall, I thought you had a very clear subject, with data that directly helped the map viewer understand where wind energy is best suited in Iowa.

One tidbit that I learned from this project was the difference in wind across the state of Iowa. I had always assumed that all of Iowa was super windy, and therefore suitable for wind turbines. I also learned that the majority of Iowa’s wind turbines are clustered mainly in ideal regions of the state. It seems like our wind energy planners really did their research!

One thing about the map layers that confused me at first was the population overlay. I wasn’t sure if the colors were still going off of the legend. I think including a note about what an ideal low-density population is in numbers (like people per square mile) would be very useful.

Another useful overlay to the map could be Iowa land use. If you zoom way in on the satellite imagery, the land use becomes apparent (generally agriculture), but including it as a basemap or overlay could help map users get a bigger picture of where the wind turbines are. This addition would be especially useful to the non-Iowan population. Those that live in Iowa know what the general population dispersion and land use are in different regions of Iowa, but others may not.

These are just formatting suggestions. I think you could’ve made the map twice the size, and made the adjacent picture much smaller. The crown jewel of this project is the map, so I think making it larger would really bring the user’s focus to it. Also, on the map, I would’ve changed the names of the overlays in the layer control to have uniform formatting (like capital letter at the beginning, spaces instead of camel case or underscores, etc.). I was glad you included your data attributions on the map, however, there were so many that while I now know the agency the data was sourced from, I really have no idea where I would find it within those agencies. A little more information about where you got your data from would be helpful.