Name:

Date:

High - Altitude Wind Power

Wind power is a clean and renewable source of energy. However, few areas have the frequent strong winds needed to produce wind power. Wind near the ground is not a reliable source of energy because it is sometimes strong and sometimes weak. Unlike the wind near the earth's surface, the wind high in the sky is (24) nearly everywhere. Some companies are now building wind power plants at high altitudes, as they can obtain stable wind power almost anywhere.

Altaeros Energies is a U.S. based company working to develop "high-altitude wind power" technology. They have designed a huge balloon that catches the wind's power at up to 600 meters in the air. The balloon is connected to cables which keep it in place and transport the energy to the earth's surface. As the wind is much stronger at 600 meters, these balloons can create more than twice as much electricity as traditional wind power at a lower cost. In other words, these balloons (25) to produce energy.

Not only do Altaeros' balloons reduce costs, they also solve a number of other problems associated with traditional wind power. To start with, the initial setup is quite easy. While traditional wind power plants require months of construction, the balloon's setup only takes a few hours. (26), they are so high in the sky that they do not disturb people's daily lives. For instance, they cause little noise pollution, and people do not have to see them every day. Seeing all these benefits, a number of large companies have invested in Altaeros' wind power balloons.

24. a. constant and powerful b. clean and clear
c. weak but reliable d. strong but unstable

25. a. reduce the wind needed b. increase the space needed
c. are a less attractive way d. are a more efficient way

23. a. Like before b. At most
c. Therefore d. Furthermore

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