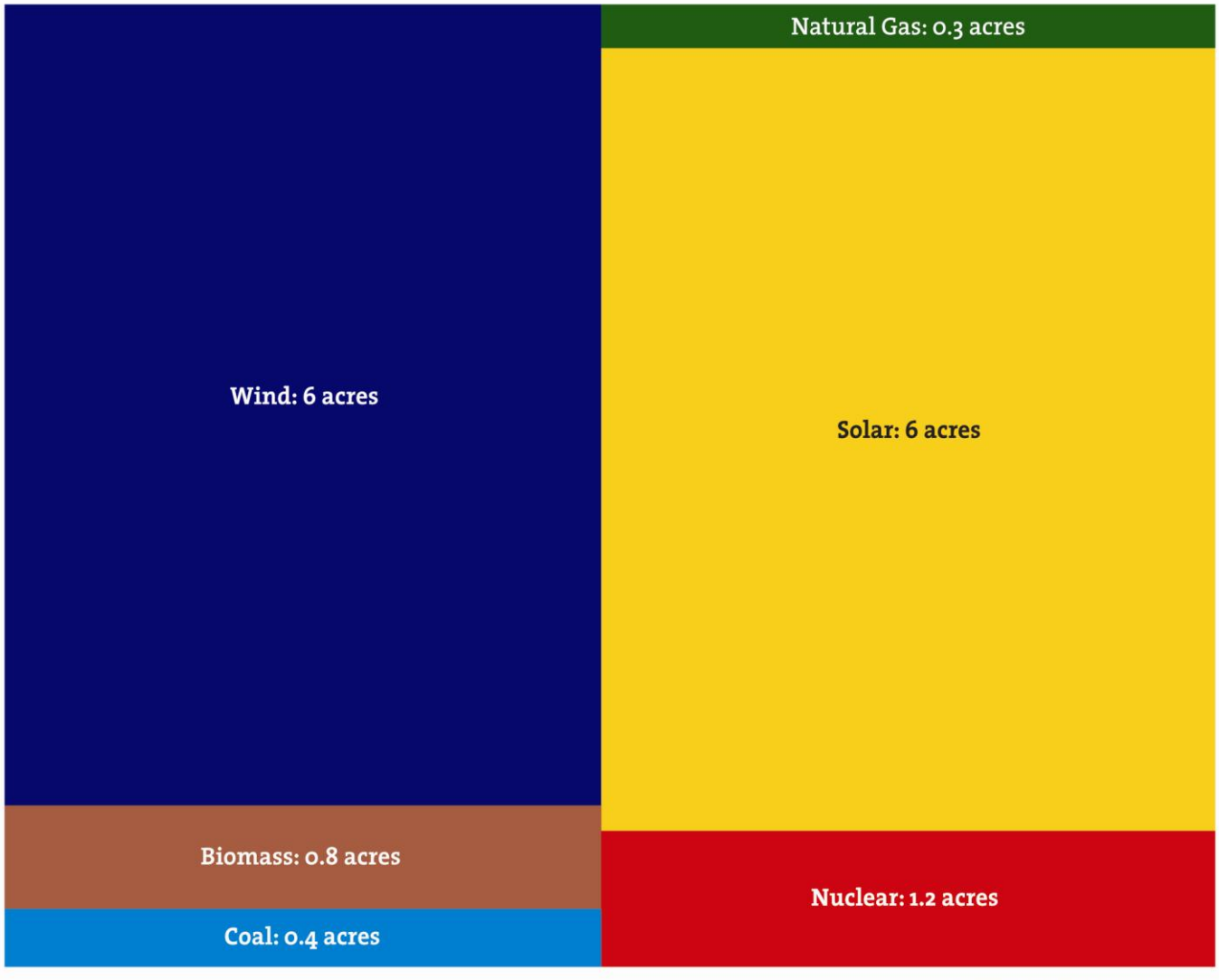
# Natural Gas: Smallest Footprint of All Energy Sources

**Compare acreage requirements for electricity production**
**(including land used for fuel production)**




Source: R.W. Beck & Black & Veatch

People across America are focused on protecting the environment by reducing greenhouse gas (carbon) emissions through the use of zero emission renewable energies. Without question, reducing carbon emissions from the generation of electricity is a critical factor to meet U.S. environmental goals. However, local policy-makers are beginning to voice concerns about the limitations of renewable resources due to land use concerns.

Different forms of power generation require varying amounts of land to generate the same amount of electricity. The picture above illustrates the land acreage needed to produce the fuel and generate enough electricity to serve 1,000 households for one year. Acreage requirements can range from six acres to one-third of one acre depending on fuel choice.

Natural gas-fired power generation requires the least amount of land needed to make solar and wind technologies viable. With the lowest carbon emissions of any fossil fuel and the smallest geographical footprint across the board, it's easy to see why the market chooses natural gas as the fuel that generates more than 20 percent of electricity consumed in the U.S. Small footprint, low emissions, "on demand" characteristics of natural gas are the reasons why demand for natural gas fired power generation will increase if Congress requires that carbon emissions be reduced.

Assessing the environmental footprint is complex and can extend well beyond emissions and acreage to include equipment manufacturing. However, the most important factor is recognizing that natural gas is a vital component of a renewable portfolio.