

Resolution on Wind Power by Seattle Audubon

WHEREAS: Greenhouse gases, primarily CO₂, are the principal cause of global climate change, posing significant threats to numerous threatened and endangered bird species, and

WHEREAS: Renewable energy sources, especially windpower, are proposed as a substitute for carbon-based fuels, and

WHEREAS: Windpower has become the major renewable energy source in Washington State, as well as the United States and the world, and

WHEREAS: Building and operating any energy source, including windpower farms, causes environmental impacts that would not occur if energy were conserved or used more efficiently, and

WHEREAS: Unlike energy conservation and efficiency, windpower energy is not completely carbon neutral, since it requires some percentage of its capacity to be backed up by readily available, carbon-based electrical sources, such as gas-fired turbines, to maintain stability of the electrical grid, and

WHEREAS: Windpower farms degrade undisturbed habitats by introducing invasive species, changing drainage patterns, and disrupting fragile soil structures, and

WHEREAS: Windpower farms are a source of mortality to birds and bats, which are essential to controlling insect pests in preference to the use of toxic pesticides and

WHEREAS: There are no mandatory federal or state criteria for siting windfarms; the existing Washington state guidelines are voluntary and designed primarily for eastern Washington, so they do not meaningfully address proposed wind developments in forested settings and don't deal at all with potential off-shore/ marine siting of wind projects, and

WHEREAS: State and federal regulations concerning migratory bird mortality at windfarms are often not enforced.

THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED THAT THE SEATTLE AUDUBON SOCIETY:

- Has concluded that the siting, construction, and operation of wind energy projects in the State of Washington must undergo more stringent environmental review. Permitting agencies must do more thorough analyses of the environmental impacts of building new windfarms, operating both old and new ones, and mitigating effects on habitats, bird and bats. Mandatory and scientifically based siting criteria must be developed and consistently applied.

- Will only support the construction of windfarms that have followed all existing voluntary state siting criteria; conducted rigorous, scientifically-based pre-construction studies; and developed similarly high standards for post construction monitoring and mitigation.
- Believes a higher priority must be given to energy conservation and efficiency through improved “green” building codes, and retrofitting of inefficient buildings.