

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Position Statement

WIND ENERGY IMPACTS ON WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Wind energy is a potentially important renewable energy source, increasingly considered for both land and offshore installations. The technology offers promise for supplying a significant portion of renewable energy portfolios that are intended to reduce both conventional pollutants and greenhouse gas and carbon-based emissions¹. While the public and many decision-makers generally believe that wind energy is environmentally benign, it may entail significant detriments to wildlife and essential habitats, which need to be more clearly understood, and addressed. State fish and wildlife agencies should be at the forefront of cooperative development and implementation of measures to characterize, avoid, minimize and effectively mitigate the impacts of wind energy development on natural resources.

Therefore the position of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, in regard to wind energy development is to:

1. Encourage greater coordination among state and federal agencies responsible for wildlife conservation, energy development and regulation to ensure consistency in permitting requirements, monitoring, and research standards that consider wildlife impacts as a core part of the decision-making process.
2. Encourage development and implementation of adaptive guidelines for siting, monitoring, and mitigation and incorporation of these guidelines into the permitting process. The guidelines will help establish standards for scientifically sound and consistent pre- and post-construction evaluations and a better understanding of population level impacts of wind energy development;
3. Discourage the siting of wind facilities in biologically significant areas, and implement on- and off-site habitat mitigation to reduce unavoidable impacts.
4. Promote the development and implementation of priority research on this issue, designed to ensure unbiased data that meet peer review and legal standards.
5. Encourage regional assessments of cumulative land-use, habitat conversion, and wildlife impacts from all energy sources, and development of cooperative conservation strategies among stakeholders that reduce conflicts and increase opportunities for mitigation and conservation.
6. Encourage education of the public and decision-makers on the trade-offs and benefits from all forms of energy, including wind energy development.

¹ These include coal, natural gas, fuel oil, as well as renewable biomass