



Audubon VERMONT

Policy on Wind Power Facilities

Audubon Vermont encourages an energy policy that reduces and minimizes impacts on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Energy conservation measures offer the most effective means of reducing and minimizing these impacts.

Audubon Vermont also encourages development of alternative renewable energy sources as an essential step toward reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.

We support the recommendations in Vermont's comprehensive energy plan "Fueling Vermont's Future" to "vigorously pursue policies to encourage cost-effective development" of wind energy, but with these caveats:

- Alternative energy development and associated infrastructure should address concerns about environmental impacts through rigorous yearlong biological assessment done prior to installation of facilities at any site. Such studies should reveal the importance of a site to migrating and resident birds and wildlife, threatened and endangered species and exemplary natural communities, Important Bird Areas, sensitive habitats like wetlands and old growth forest, extensive unfragmented forest, and areas where significant conservation investment has been made.
- Sites with significant natural values should be avoided.
- Sites with existing disturbance or development infrastructure, like downhill ski areas, should be given priority. Sites close to support roads and power distribution grids should be given priority. Power generating facilities should favor monopole towers over lattice towers, unguyed rather than guyed towers, unlit towers less than 200 feet in height, white strobe lights flashing 20 times per minute rather than red lights if lit, setbacks from ridge tops. Native vegetation regrowth should be encouraged around towers to the extent practicable.
- We encourage power development on public lands only after comprehensive studies by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and U. S. Forest Service, with concurrence of professional outside consultants, of impacts of such development on birds, other wildlife and their habitats on all likely sites on applicable public lands.
- We encourage a siting process that permits full and open public participation and appeals.
- We urge imposition of a bond to ensure removal of towers and accompanying infrastructure and restoration of original cover if towers cease operation for more than six months.

Adopted: September 22, 2003