



Audubon CALIFORNIA

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July 17, 2001

Assemblyman John Longville
Room 3123, State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1207: Support

Dear Assemblyman Longville:

The National Audubon Society--California is pleased to support your AB 1207 which requires cities and counties to consider the siting and operation of a small wind energy system as a "use by right" if it meets the specified requirements. We have been asked by your bill sponsors to comment on the potential significant effect of AB 1207 and small wind energy on bird populations in California.

Audubon's main objective is the protection of birds and other wildlife and their habitat. We are also interested in supporting legislation that helps California deal with its current energy crisis, and that supports renewable forms of energy.

Audubon has a long history of working with the wind power industry in an effort to study and minimize the impacts of wind power development on birds and wildlife habitat. It is true that there is a correlation between bird deaths and large wind turbine farms. For example, in a recent eleven month research on Altamont, they found that 95 birds died from the wind turbines.

Unlike large-scale wind turbine operations with hundreds or thousands of turbines, AB 1207 encourages the use of small-scale wind turbines that produce approximately 50 kilowatts versus 1 megawatt of energy produced by large-scale wind turbines.

Unlike large-scale wind turbines (100 meters tall), small-scale wind turbines (30 meters tall) are a lot shorter and will not be used in the construction of large wind farms in California. The problems associated with large-scale turbines are that they are often times in the height range of migrating birds. The turbine blades also move at very high speeds, which is hard to detect by birds moving along a traditional migratory route.

We cannot assure you that there will be no bird deaths from small-scale wind turbines, but the numbers will reflect a death toll similar to the deaths caused by other stationary objects that birds routinely fly into, not the large death tolls seen with large wind turbine farms.

We do not feel that there is any significant threat to bird populations from small-scale wind turbines, and are pleased to support your AB 1207.

Sincerely,

John McCaull
Legislative Director