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## ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE GROUPS CALL ON SALAZAR TO IMMEDIATELY SUSPEND WORK ON HIGH-LEVEL WIND TURBINE/WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Department of the Interior urged to remove the corrosive influence of industry; restore science in its decision-making

WASHINGTON D.C. (May 11, 2009) – [In a letter submitted today](#), environmental and wildlife groups<sup>1</sup> called on Interior Secretary Kenneth Salazar to immediately suspend work on the Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service<sup>2</sup> citing excessive industry influence in preparing the Committee's draft recommendations. The letter follows up on a [January 2008 correspondence](#) sent to the Secretary's predecessor, Dirk Kempthorne, where the groups raised concern with the unlawful imbalance in the Committee's membership in favor of wind power proponents and paid representatives. The imbalance is in violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), governing the establishment of federal advisory committees.

In the letter, the groups assert that after more than one and one-half years since the Committee's formation, [the draft recommendations](#) read more as an unabashed endorsement of wind power than a rigorous effort to address the harmful – and ever growing – effects on wildlife of poorly sited and constructed wind power projects. Despite its charter to “provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior” regarding “effective measures to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitats related to land-based wind energy facilities,” the Committee's draft recommendations do little more than offer justifications for *not* developing rigorous, enforceable criteria to address the escalating wildlife impacts.

“The Committee's makeup continues to be dominated by wind power proponents, advocates, and industry representatives,” said Eric R. Glitzenstein of [Meyer Glitzenstein & Crystal](#), the public interest law firm representing the groups. “Unfortunately, our concerns of a year ago have now been validated with the Committee's draft recommendations, which do not even begin to acknowledge the parameters of the problem - let alone prescribe meaningful solutions.” For example, Glitzenstein

added, “wind power projects in the Eastern U.S. have already killed thousands of bats, and yet the draft recommendations are silent regarding the effects on species that are also being decimated by a deadly disease, known as *white-nose syndrome*.”

The groups urge Secretary Salazar to take immediate action and suspend the work of the Committee in order to reevaluate its composition and operation. They also recommend the Secretary make all necessary changes to ensure the committee has the genuine scientific expertise and independence required to develop recommendations that are truly protective of migratory birds, bats, and other wildlife resources. This essential action, if taken, will show that the Secretary is serious in his promise to restore sound science in the Interior Department’s decision-making, rather than the usual rhetoric that places our wildlife resources at high risk and erodes public confidence in government. The letter was also sent to the Inspector General for the Interior and members of Congress in order to encourage appropriate oversight measures.

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<sup>1</sup>Groups represented:

[Industrial Wind Action Group](#)

[Center for Biological Diversity](#)

[The Humane Society of the United States](#)

[D. Daniel Boone](#)

[Maryland Conservation Council](#)

[Save Our Allegheny Ridges](#)

[Friends of Blackwater Canyon](#)

[Protect the Flint Hills](#)

Chautauqua County Citizens for Responsible Wind Power

[Green Berkshires, Inc.](#)

[Juniata Valley Audubon Society](#)

Ripley Hawk Watch

[Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound](#)

[Wildlife Advocacy Project](#)

Union Neighbors United

[Laurel Mountain Preservation Association](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee](#) was formed to provide advice and recommendations to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in developing effective measures to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitats related to land-based wind energy facilities (see Fed. Reg. 72:11373 (March 13, 2007)). Former Interior Secretary Kempthorne announced the appointment of 22 people to the committee on October 24, 2007.