



Industrial Wind Action Group

facts, analysis, exposure of wind energy's real impacts

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AUDUBON NEW YORK'S COMMITMENT TO WIND ENERGY CALLED SUPERFICIAL AND ILL CONSIDERED

Industrial Wind Action Group says Audubon's objectives not met with renewable energy credits; Highlights prairie habitat fragmentation at Ainsworth Wind Site

NEW HAMPSHIRE (July 18, 2006). Industrial Wind Action Group (IWA) questioned Audubon New York's program to purchase wind-generated electricity for 100% of the energy used at its New York offices¹, calling the action symbolic and ill considered. Lisa Linowes, spokesperson for IWA, identified three key reasons Audubon New York's actions contradict their intended objectives:

- 1. *Wind-generated electricity sourced from Nebraska's Ainsworth wind facility will never reach Audubon offices in New York.*** Nebraska's Ainsworth wind plant is located far outside the New York grid structure. Audubon is purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs), an action that will have no impact on the organization's actual use of and sources for electricity. The purchase merely rewards wind energy marketers and has no influence on grid management decisions in New York.
- 2. *The Ainsworth facility has not demonstrated low bird mortality.*** Audubon New York claims its selection of the Ainsworth facility is largely attributed to efforts by the wind developer to properly site the facility in Nebraska. However, the Ainsworth wind energy facility did not comply with Audubon New York's own position on wind power development². The site is built on the Nebraska Sandhills, listed in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as a habitat area of major concern in North America³. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service raised concerns regarding impacts on

¹ <http://ny.audubon.org/news/060711.htm> – Audubon NY's recent press release, July 11, 2006

² http://ny.audubon.org/wind_power.htm - Audubon NY's position on wind power development. Note, at the Ainsworth wind plant, needed pre-development surveys were not done and listed species habitat was not avoided.

³ <http://www.asiwpca.org/comments/Nebraska1.pdf> - Letter from Nebraska's Game and Parks Commission, April 2, 2003

the Whooping Crane, Bald Eagle⁴, and now Prairie Chicken habitat. The Ainsworth site has been in operation only since September 2005. Sources at Nebraska Public Power District clarified last week that post-construction bird-strike monitoring of the site began March 2006 and no information is yet available. Audubon's claim of low bird mortality rates is premature and appears unsubstantiated.

3. *Federally endangered American Burying Beetle is threatened by the Ainsworth facility.*

The American Burying Beetle, listed under the Endangered Species Act, is struggling to survive in the face of habitat fragmentation, an obvious consequence of wind energy development. The Ainsworth wind developer reported finding the American Burying Beetle on the site. Audubon New York's financial support of an industrial wind project constructed within the habitat of a federally endangered animal is inconsistent with its wind energy position and appears to be at odds with Massachusetts Audubon's efforts to reintroduce and recover this species at its sanctuary on Nantucket Island⁵.

"Unfortunately, this is the current situation regarding siting of wind facilities in the United States today. Rather than rushing to embrace wind energy, Audubon New York's actions would be more credible if it adhered to the standards and policies already established by, and for, the organization," Linowes said, "particularly given industrial wind energy's limited value as a source of base-load electricity capacity".

Industrial Wind Action Group seeks to promote knowledge and raise awareness of the risks and damaging environmental impacts of industrial wind energy development. Information and analysis on the subject is available through its website, www.windaction.org.

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⁴ <http://www.windaction.org/documents/3991> – Letter from US Fish and Wildlife to Nebraska Public Power District, April 18, 2003

⁵ http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0ASV/is_2_28/ai_101569197 – American Burying Beetle reintroduction at Massachusetts Audubon sanctuary, 2003