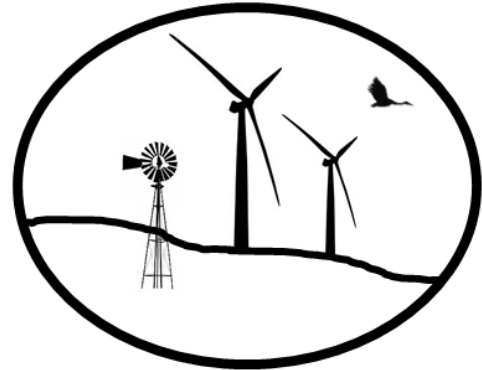


## Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

March 9, 2015



### Around Nebraska...

It is Legislative Session time again! The first day of the 2015 session was on January 7, 2015. Several bills related to energy and transmission have been introduced. Please let me know if I have missed any relevant bills. The [Nebraska Legislative Bills](#) are listed at the end of the message.

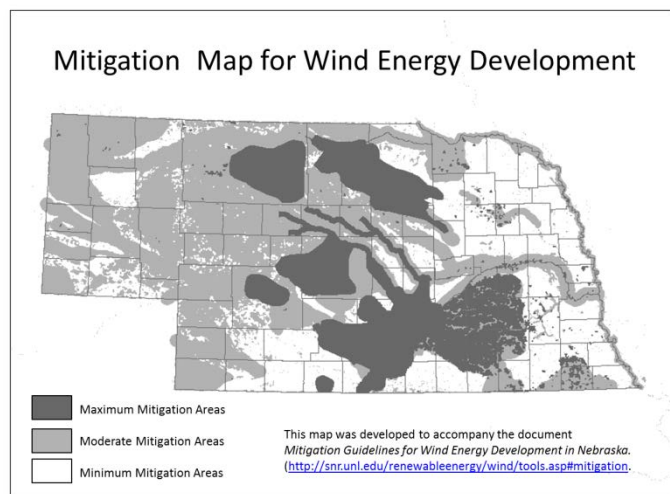
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### COMMENT DEADLINE MARCH 31, 2015: [MITIGATION GUIDELINES FOR WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN NEBRASKA](#)

The [Mitigation Guidelines for Wind Energy Development in Nebraska](#) were developed to standardize the mitigation process.

Wind energy developers will be provided a better idea of what mitigation, if any, will likely be recommended for wind energy facilities developed in different parts of the state. The Guidelines were developed by representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups and now, we want your input.

The document is currently in working draft format. All comments submitted to [windwildlife@unl.edu](mailto:windwildlife@unl.edu) in the next six months will be compiled. Updates will be made in April 2015.



Questions? Contact Caroline Jezierski @ 402-472-8188 or [windwildlife@unl.edu](mailto:windwildlife@unl.edu).

<http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/tools.asp#mitigation>

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**[Report: Solar, wind energy has huge potential in state.](#)** Nebraska wind and solar advocates said last week that renewable energy has the potential to supply almost 75 percent of the state's needs. A new report produced by the Wind Energy Foundation, Creighton University and Washington-based consultants David Gardiner and Associates said "significant cost declines" for electricity generated by wind and solar power is spurring development in Nebraska and nationwide. ([http://www.theindependent.com/news/business/report-solar-wind-energy-has-huge-potential-in-state/article\\_5f41ff0c-b95e-11e4-aaf2-d72cdd328fdc.html](http://www.theindependent.com/news/business/report-solar-wind-energy-has-huge-potential-in-state/article_5f41ff0c-b95e-11e4-aaf2-d72cdd328fdc.html)).

**[Report: Nebraska's \\$1 Billion from Renewables just scratching the surface](http://aweablog.org/blog/post/report-nebraskas-1-billion-from-renewables-just-scratching-the-surface_1)**. More than \$1 billion of investment in renewable energy has generated over 22,000 jobs for Nebraska alone, a recently released report finds. ([http://aweablog.org/blog/post/report-nebraskas-1-billion-from-renewables-just-scratching-the-surface\\_1](http://aweablog.org/blog/post/report-nebraskas-1-billion-from-renewables-just-scratching-the-surface_1)).

**[Neb. lawmakers look to boost renewable energy industry](https://www.sn1.com/Interactivex/article.aspx?Cdlid=A-30806416-11574)**. A bipartisan group of Nebraska lawmakers has introduced a package of five bills aimed at boosting the state's renewable energy industry. The proposals deal with creating financial incentives, streamlining processes for renewable energy projects and calling for a state energy plan. (<https://www.sn1.com/Interactivex/article.aspx?Cdlid=A-30806416-11574>).

**[LES Wind RFP Evaluation Workshop](http://www.les.com/pdf/resource-library/wind-workshops-0115.pdf)**. Lincoln Electric System (LES) offered two workshops on their RFP evaluation process for wind energy. The power point presentation from the workshops is available for viewing. (<http://www.les.com/pdf/resource-library/wind-workshops-0115.pdf>).

**[Engineers earn \\$1.5M to develop wind turbine monitors](http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/engineers-earn-15m-to-develop-wind-turbine-monitors/)**. Electrical signals regularly provide vital information on the condition of patients, with cardiologists using EKGs to detect heart arrhythmias and neurologists employing EEGs to pinpoint brain injuries. With a new \$1.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Energy, UNL electrical engineers are teaming with General Electric Global Research to develop a health monitoring system that applies the same principle toward diagnosing and prognosticating damage in wind turbines. (<http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/engineers-earn-15m-to-develop-wind-turbine-monitors/>).

**[Engineers demonstrate solar cell material's vast potential](http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/engineers-demonstrate-solar-cell-material-s-vast-potential/)**. A promising solar cell material is making big waves for its ability to harness the sun's energy as inexpensively and easily as current silicon-based solar technology. UNL engineers have discovered that it's even better than previously thought — at least 3,000 times better. (<http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/engineers-demonstrate-solar-cell-material-s-vast-potential/>).

**[Nebraska wind farm to go dark during storms to protect nearby weather radar](http://www.omaha.com/weather/nebraska-wind-farm-to-go-dark-during-storms-to-protect/article_26a182fe-2de3-5ff5-9d59-4fcd87099782.html)**. A commercial wind farm proposed for south-central Nebraska has agreed to shut down during severe weather, which will protect the integrity of radar scans by a nearby National Weather Service station. NextEra Energy Resources, the nation's largest wind developer, has agreed to voluntarily turn off the turbines at the proposed Cottonwood Wind Project when asked to do so by weather service meteorologists. ([http://www.omaha.com/weather/nebraska-wind-farm-to-go-dark-during-storms-to-protect/article\\_26a182fe-2de3-5ff5-9d59-4fcd87099782.html](http://www.omaha.com/weather/nebraska-wind-farm-to-go-dark-during-storms-to-protect/article_26a182fe-2de3-5ff5-9d59-4fcd87099782.html)).

### ***Wind Energy Developments***

**[Wind forum draws a crowd](http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/wind-forum-draws-a-crowd/article_4a7700c9-00c7-5a8e-8d51-bfe1a3b47626.html)**. Nearly 100 people, mostly residents of the Cortland, Hallam and Martell areas, packed a wind forum Tuesday night that could have been called Wind Energy 101. ([http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/wind-forum-draws-a-crowd/article\\_4a7700c9-00c7-5a8e-8d51-bfe1a3b47626.html](http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/wind-forum-draws-a-crowd/article_4a7700c9-00c7-5a8e-8d51-bfe1a3b47626.html)).

**[Cortland area residents concerned about wind turbines](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/cortland-area-residents-concerned-about-wind-turbines/article_e37ecdc1-4d18-567a-8613-18408ad38049.html)**. Cindy and Larry Chapman fear they could soon have a view of a field of 436-foot-tall wind turbines from their acreage near Cortland. They want Lancaster County officials to ensure any wind farm in the county doesn't endanger the health of nearby property owners or devalue their property. ([http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/cortland-area-residents-concerned-about-wind-turbines/article\\_e37ecdc1-4d18-567a-8613-18408ad38049.html](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/cortland-area-residents-concerned-about-wind-turbines/article_e37ecdc1-4d18-567a-8613-18408ad38049.html)).

**[Local View: Support wind energy development](http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/local-view-support-wind-energy-development/article_e35225ef-ca2e-5ff2-8ae6-43948e06b30c.html)**. The currently proposed Hallam Wind Project could provide enough clean, emissions-free, renewable electricity generation to power more than 20,000 Nebraska residences annually. Wind energy development is relatively new to Nebraska, and as such, there are many misconceptions and much misinformation that go along with it. ([http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/local-view-support-wind-energy-development/article\\_e35225ef-ca2e-5ff2-8ae6-43948e06b30c.html](http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/local-view-support-wind-energy-development/article_e35225ef-ca2e-5ff2-8ae6-43948e06b30c.html)).

**[Gage County considers wind farm setbacks.](http://journalstar.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/gage-county-considers-wind-farm-setbacks/article_b9d73439-0b7b-5c36-b333-a255238d5635.html)** A proposed wind farm that would cover a portion of northern Gage County prompted the County Board of Supervisors to review setback requirements during Wednesday's meeting. ([http://journalstar.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/gage-county-considers-wind-farm-setbacks/article\\_b9d73439-0b7b-5c36-b333-a255238d5635.html](http://journalstar.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/gage-county-considers-wind-farm-setbacks/article_b9d73439-0b7b-5c36-b333-a255238d5635.html)).

**[Gage County officials to participate in Lancaster County wind meetings.](http://beatricedailysun.com/news/local/7a80717e-4037-5e35-8715-19ca4d4923a9.html)** Planning and Zoning officials from Gage and Lancaster counties will be working together as they reexamine each county's regulations for wind farms. Lisa Wiegand, with Gage County Planning and Zoning, said the group was recently approached by officials with the Lancaster County Planning Department regarding wind farm regulations. (<http://beatricedailysun.com/news/local/7a80717e-4037-5e35-8715-19ca4d4923a9.html>).

**[Wind farm zoning change delayed.](http://journalstar.com/business/local/wind-farm-zoning-change-delayed/article_de9e0f53-01d1-5da7-b47f-158785b4ea30.html)** The company that wants to build a wind farm in southern Lancaster County has withdrawn its application to change the zoning code. Jeffrey Wagner, president of Volkswind USA, said his company pulled the application at the request of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department. ([http://journalstar.com/business/local/wind-farm-zoning-change-delayed/article\\_de9e0f53-01d1-5da7-b47f-158785b4ea30.html](http://journalstar.com/business/local/wind-farm-zoning-change-delayed/article_de9e0f53-01d1-5da7-b47f-158785b4ea30.html)).

**[Landowners hear wind development advice.](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/landowners-hear-wind-development-advice/article_426305e9-51a9-5ff9-a967-1aadbe20dd24.html)** With NEXtera Energy Resources showing its interest across eastern Butler and western Saunders counties, Brainard area landowners invited the public to a forum Feb. 24 at East Butler High School. ([http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/landowners-hear-wind-development-advice/article\\_426305e9-51a9-5ff9-a967-1aadbe20dd24.html](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/landowners-hear-wind-development-advice/article_426305e9-51a9-5ff9-a967-1aadbe20dd24.html)).

**[Wind farm proposed in Butler, Saunders counties.](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/wind-farm-proposed-in-butler-saunders-counties/article_c3a1a341-981b-58f4-a5f0-80c7d35c440c.html)** It's fair to say the County Board of Supervisors encountered some major gusts of information during an hour of the board's meeting late Monday morning. NEXtera Energy Resources' director of development, Lisa Sullivan, took the board through a whirlwind presentation of the Jubilee Project, a proposed wind turbine farm that would occupy a 33,000 acre area, potentially stretching from the Bruno and Brainard areas east into Saunders County. About two-thirds of the area is in Butler County. ([http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/wind-farm-proposed-in-butler-saunders-counties/article\\_c3a1a341-981b-58f4-a5f0-80c7d35c440c.html](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/wind-farm-proposed-in-butler-saunders-counties/article_c3a1a341-981b-58f4-a5f0-80c7d35c440c.html)).

### ***Transmission***

**[Sand Hills route final despite Fish and Wildlife Service's concern, NPPD says.](http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/sand-hills-route-final-despite-fish-and-wildlife-service-s/article_22a264d1-93bb-5259-a844-38402687c912.html)** The final route of a proposed high-voltage power line should be moved out of the heart of the Sand Hills, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The federal agency says a new route would avoid harming habitat important to threatened and endangered species and migratory birds. But Nebraska Public Power District, the power line builder, says the route is final, and there will be no changes. ([http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/sand-hills-route-final-despite-fish-and-wildlife-service-s/article\\_22a264d1-93bb-5259-a844-38402687c912.html](http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/sand-hills-route-final-despite-fish-and-wildlife-service-s/article_22a264d1-93bb-5259-a844-38402687c912.html)).

**[Sandhills power line: Scar on the land or gateway to more wind energy?](http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/sandhills-power-line-scar-on-the-land-or-gateway-to/article_ee7371c3-5b70-5dc0-a750-82f644ab6c15.html)** He and a handful of other ranchers say the project as now routed would scar the landscape with access roads, destroy wet meadows and windbreaks, harm sensitive wildlife areas, create blowouts (areas where wind erosion literally "blows out" holes in the landscape) and open the region to more power line projects and development. ([http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/sandhills-power-line-scar-on-the-land-or-gateway-to/article\\_ee7371c3-5b70-5dc0-a750-82f644ab6c15.html](http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/sandhills-power-line-scar-on-the-land-or-gateway-to/article_ee7371c3-5b70-5dc0-a750-82f644ab6c15.html)).

## **Around the Nation & World...**

### ***Wind and Wildlife***

**[Leading Bird Group Files Petition to Regulate the Wind Industry.](#)** American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has filed a formal petition with the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) calling for the agency to establish new regulations governing the impacts of wind energy projects on migratory birds. The [ABC petition](#) was filed on February 12, 2015 and includes substantial revisions to an earlier petition filed by ABC in

December 2011 that also called for wind industry regulatory action that would reduce the projected 1.4-2 million bird deaths expected to be caused by the industry when it reaches projected build out levels. (<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/150218.html>).

**[FWS considers permitting for unintentional bird kills.](#)** The Fish and Wildlife Service is considering establishing a permitting system that would allow the legal, unintentional killing of the more than 1,000 bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a move that could offer legal certainty under a law fraught with ambiguity. (<http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060013481>).

**[Federal court remands renewable energy project for additional explanation; delay ensues.](#)** A federal district court in Nevada ruled that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) failed to adequately explain a decision to authorize a proposed wind energy project. The court remanded the decision to BLM for analysis the court determined to be absent from the administrative record and ordered the agency to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) to address new information regarding the presence of golden eagles within the project area. This decision reinforces the importance of developing and maintaining a thorough administrative record for projects requiring federal approval. (<http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=8b4c9002-9af8-4ddc-91dc-a121e3137797>).

**[Huge wind farm will help not harm rare birds, says Supreme Court.](#)** A ruling by the UK's Supreme Court, as reported over at Business Green, has taken a stand where one project is concerned. In [giving the go ahead for the 370MW Viking onshore wind farm](#) on The Shetland Islands, the court rejected concerns about risk to the nesting habitat of the rare whimbrel seabird, noting that the developers' biodiversity and conservation plans may actually enhance, not harm, whimbrel populations. (<http://www.treehugger.com/renewable-energy/huge-wind-farm-will-help-not-harm-rare-birds-says-supreme-court.html>).

**[Commissioner to developer: Why did you ignore U.S. Fish and Wildlife.](#)** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wrote to the county in October to say land area within three miles of the Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay shorelines needs to be protected from wind energy development. Months later, planners gave the go-ahead to a developer with plans to put at least 20 wind turbines within two to three miles of Saginaw Bay. ([http://www.michigansthum.com/news/article\\_9419f4fa-b3d2-11e4-bbab-7f31309cee58.html](http://www.michigansthum.com/news/article_9419f4fa-b3d2-11e4-bbab-7f31309cee58.html)).

**[Another Eagle Death at Nevada Wind Project.](#)** A wind energy facility in eastern Nevada killed its second golden eagle in January, and environmentalists are demanding action from the federal government to prevent more eagle deaths there. Pattern Energy's 152-megawatt Spring Valley Wind project, which occupies about 7,700 acres of public land in White Pine County near Ely, Nevada, attracted attention two years ago when an eagle died there in February 2013. Another eagle was killed at the site in early February of this year. (<http://www.kcet.org/news/define/rewire/wind/another-eagle-death-at-nevada-wind-project.html>).

**[Looking out for our avian neighbors.](#)** The wind industry gets little credit for its great effort to protect wildlife of all kinds, probably because the effort goes under reported. That work includes the radar detection of approaching birds, controls that change a turbine's start and stop times, and more. (<http://www.windpowerengineering.com/featured/looking-our-for-our-avian-neighbors/>).

**[Wildlife experts: Huron turbines could kill thousands of bats.](#)** To clear the air on what some county officials called a "wishy-washy" stance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists visited Huron County on Wednesday to affirm that wind turbines should not be sited within three miles of Great Lakes shorelines. ([http://www.michigansthum.com/news/article\\_99463594-c442-11e4-90f3-f3a48e3b9d48.html](http://www.michigansthum.com/news/article_99463594-c442-11e4-90f3-f3a48e3b9d48.html)).

**[Oakfield wind farm opponents argue feds failed to study effect on Atlantic salmon.](#)** Opponents of a [148-megawatt wind farm in the Aroostook County town of Oakfield](#) that broke ground in September are asking a federal judge to withdraw the project's permit and require additional review to see if it harms endangered Atlantic salmon. Protect Our Lakes and the Forest Ecology Network, both nonprofit groups,

and people who own camps in the area in 2013 sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Department of the Interior over the 50-turbine farm. (<http://bangordailynews.com/2015/02/12/news/bangor/oakfield-wind-farm-opponents-argue-feds-failed-to-study-effect-on-atlantic-salmon/>).

**[German Wind Turbines Killing Migratory Bats](#)**. A new study has determined that a significant number of bats are being killed by wind turbines in Germany — of which more than two-thirds of bats are in the process of migrating between their summer and winter habitats. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2015/02/16/german-wind-turbines-killing-migratory-bats/>).

**[Wildlife and renewable energy: German politics cross migratory bats](#)**. Christian C. Vogt et al. 2015. European Journal of Wildlife Research. ([http://www.researchgate.net/publication/272093731\\_Wildlife\\_and\\_renewable\\_energy\\_German\\_politics\\_cross\\_migratory\\_bats](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/272093731_Wildlife_and_renewable_energy_German_politics_cross_migratory_bats)).

**[Small Wind Projects: Threat to Wildlife and Habitat?](#)** So, yes, wind turbines do kill birds. However, this is essentially a utility-scale wind farm issue. One has to look very hard to find any documentation of small wind-related bird mortality. (<http://solartoday.org/2015/02/small-wind-projects-threat-to-wildlife-and-habitat/>).

**[B.C.'s environmental studies pose an unsettling paradox](#)**. Environmental assessment studies for industrial projects are contributing to the knowledge we have about B.C.'s wildlife, but are they helping to protect anything? (<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/resources/environmental+studies+pose+unsettling+paradox/10849203/story.html>).

**[Finland: Wind farm aims to limit harm to birds](#)**. A wind farm being built off Finland's west coast will feature a new system designed to limit the danger -- potentially setting a new standard for future wind power facilities in the country. The 11-turbine maritime wind farm to open next summer on Tahkoluoto Island offshore from Pori will be unusual in global terms. It will include a new bird radar. Pori's coastal and delta area is one of Finland's most important areas for migratory birds. (<http://www.adn.com/article/20150305/finland-wind-farm-aims-limit-harm-birds>).

## **Wildlife**

**[The monarch massacre: Nearly a billion butterflies have vanished](#)**. Threatened animals like elephants, porpoises and lions grab all the headlines, but what's happening to monarch butterflies is nothing short of a massacre. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service summed it up in just one grim statistic on Monday: Since 1990, about 970 million have vanished. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/02/09/the-monarch-massacre-nearly-a-billion-butterflies-have-vanished/>).

**[Study of golden eagles in Bighorn Basin revealing details on apex predator](#)**. Golden eagles living in Wyoming's northern Bighorn Basin are so dependent on cottontail rabbits as a food source that bunny abundance is a big driver of eagle reproductive success. ([http://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/study-of-golden-eagles-in-bighorn-basin-revealing-details-on/article\\_46d3c250-5540-5a92-8fd3-edc2ee9e63.html](http://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/study-of-golden-eagles-in-bighorn-basin-revealing-details-on/article_46d3c250-5540-5a92-8fd3-edc2ee9e63.html)).

## **Wind**

**[Coupling Doppler radar-derived wind maps with operational turbine data to document wind farm complex flows](#)**. Brian D. Hirth et al. 2014, Wind Energy. The first known dual-Doppler (DD) measurements collected within a utility-scale wind farm are presented. (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/we.1701/abstract?campaign=woletoc>).



**[Senate votes down PTC amendment.](#)** A majority of the Senate went on record yesterday against reinstating an expired renewable energy tax credit through the end of the decade. The 47-51 failure of a nonbinding measure calling for a five-year extension of the production tax credit (PTC) delivered a tough start to the year for supporters of the wind energy industry, the credit's primary beneficiary. (<http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060012507>).

**[NREL Releases the 2013 Renewable Energy Data Book, Detailing Increases in Installed Capacity.](#)**

The newly released [2013 Renewable Energy Data Book](#) illustrates United States and global energy statistics, including renewable electricity generation, renewable energy development, clean energy investments, and technology-specific data and trends. The Data Book is produced and published annually by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) on behalf of the Energy Department's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. (<http://www.nrel.gov/news/press/2015/15450.html>).

**[WHAT 2014 MEANT FOR WIND IN 5 GRAPHICS.](#)** In 2014, 4,854 megawatts (MW) were installed in the U.S. – over four times more new wind energy than in 2013. There were about 2,500 turbines installed in 19 states – enough to power 1.4 million average American homes. However, the amount installed in 2014 still falls far short of what the industry was able to complete in 2012 when it had more long-term policy certainty. As American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) CEO Tom Kiernan stated, “Wind is gaining strength, but as recent history shows, we can do a whole lot more.” (<http://aweablog.org/blog/post/what-2014-meant-for-wind-in-5-graphics>).

**[Wind Energy Benefits.](#)** Ten benefits of wind energy from the U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy office. (<http://apps2.eere.energy.gov/wind/windexchange/pdfs/wind-energy-benefits.pdf>).

**[Transmission Line That Could Bring Wind And Solar Power To Millions In West Gets Go-Ahead.](#)** The federal government approved a major renewable energy transmission line that could help open up the West to stranded solar and wind assets and enable up to 3,000 megawatts of renewable energy — enough to power over one million homes — to feed into the grid. The \$2 billion project, overseen by SunZia, will span 515 miles across New Mexico and Arizona. (<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/01/26/3615287/new-mexico-arizona-renewable-energy-transmission-line-approved/>).

**[WHAT AFFECTS THE FATE OF WIND FARMS?](#)** Why do some wind farm applications get approved, while others run up against insurmountable roadblocks? Finding an answer could ultimately affect whether a country meets its renewable energy targets. If the reasons behind rejections remain mysterious, developers could give up on attempting new wind energy projects. (<http://conservationmagazine.org/2015/01/what-affects-the-fate-of-wind-farms/>).

### **Other**

**[This amazing gadget is the best technology we have for trapping CO2.](#)** Here's a shocker. It looks like one of the best weapons we have right now in the fight-to-the-death cage match that is combatting climate change is — drumroll please — planting trees! ([http://grist.org/news/this-amazing-gadget-is-the-best-technology-we-have-for-trapping-co2/?utm\\_source=syndication&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://grist.org/news/this-amazing-gadget-is-the-best-technology-we-have-for-trapping-co2/?utm_source=syndication&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=feed)).

**[Transmission line faces court challenge.](#)** The Illinois Commerce Commission's ruling on the Illinois portion of a controversial high-voltage overhead energy transmission line is being challenged in appeals court. ([http://www.mywebtimes.com/news/local/transmission-line-faces-court-challenge/article\\_ff7df26a-2e95-58a6-942f-2be1c70753ac.html](http://www.mywebtimes.com/news/local/transmission-line-faces-court-challenge/article_ff7df26a-2e95-58a6-942f-2be1c70753ac.html)).

**[Connectivity of Streams & Wetlands to Downstream Waters: A Review & Synthesis of the Scientific Evidence.](#)** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Office of Research and Development has finalized the report Connectivity of Streams and Wetlands to Downstream Waters: A

Review and Synthesis of the Scientific Evidence. The report reviews more than 1,200 peer-reviewed publications and summarizes current scientific understanding about the connectivity and mechanisms by which streams and wetlands, singly or in aggregate, affect the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of downstream waters. (<http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=296414>).

**[Scientists Have Figured Out a Way to Convert Solar Energy Into Liquid Fuel](#)**. Researchers at Harvard have discovered how to convert solar energy into liquid fuel, potentially accelerating our switch to the alternative-energy source, according to an article in this month's scientific journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). (<http://time.com/3706444/solar-energy-liquid-fuel/>).

**[Efficient solar-to-fuels production from a hybrid microbial–water-splitting catalyst system](#)**. Joseph P. Torella et al. PNAS. (<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2015/02/06/1424872112>).

### **Upcoming Conferences**

**[The North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference](#)** will be in Omaha, NE on March 8-13, 2015.

([http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=348:north-american-conference-10&catid=37:NAWNRC&Itemid=61](http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=348:north-american-conference-10&catid=37:NAWNRC&Itemid=61)).

**[AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar](#)** will be in Austin, TX on March 10-11, 2015.

(<http://www.awea.org/events/Event.aspx?EventID=30886&SubSectionID=6678&navItemNumber=656>).

**[Conference on Wind energy and Wildlife Impacts](#)** will be in Berlin, Germany, March 10-12, 2015.

(<http://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/>). Presentation titles are now available at: [http://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/menue/oral\\_poster\\_presentations/parameter/en/](http://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/menue/oral_poster_presentations/parameter/en/).

**[The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Audubon's Crane Festival](#)** will be in Kearney, NE, March 19-22, 2015.

(<http://nebraskacranefestival.org/>).

**[The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life](#)**. The fourth International Conference on "The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life" will take place in Dublin, Ireland, July 10-16, 2016. (<http://www.an2016.org/>).

### **Tools**

**[WGA launches RAPID Toolkit to speed, streamline siting and permitting of transmission lines](#)**. Western Governors have rolled out the RAPID Toolkit, an online tool that streamlines the challenge of siting and permitting transmission lines in the West. The online tool is the culmination of a multi-year effort by Western Governors to tackle the challenge of transmission line siting and permitting. (<http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/847-wga-launches-rapid-toolkit-to-speed-streamline-siting-and-permitting-of-transmission-lines>).

### **Nebraska Legislative Bills** (updates in red)

**[LB117](#)** - *Change provisions relating to energy financing contracts*. Introduced by Haar on January 9, 2015; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 12, 2015; **Notice of Hearing for March 4, 2015**; **Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note**. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to energy; to amend sections 66-1062, 66-1064, 66-1065, and 66-1066, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to redefine terms; to change provisions relating to energy financing contracts between energy service companies and governmental

units; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.  
([http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view\\_bill.php?DocumentID=24434](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24434)).

**LB407** - *Change and eliminate provisions relating to certified renewable export facilities as prescribed.* Introduced by Haar on January 16, 2015; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 20, 2015; **Notice of Hearing for March 4, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note.** A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public power; to amend sections 70-1001.01 and 70-1014.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to eliminate provisions relating to criteria for approval of certain facilities as prescribed; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; and to outright repeal section 70-1028, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014.  
([http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view\\_bill.php?DocumentID=24692](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24692)).

**LB412** - *Change provisions relating to the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act.* Introduced by Mello on January 16, 2015; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 20, 2015; **Notice of Hearing for February 20, 2015; Statement of Intent, Committee Statement, and Fiscal Note; Placed on General File on March 4, 2015.** A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act; to amend sections 70-1907, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and 70-1903, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to redefine a term; to change requirements for project developers; and to repeal the original sections.  
([http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view\\_bill.php?DocumentID=24483](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24483)).

**LB423** - *Change a renewable energy tax credit.* Introduced by Nordquist on January 16, 2015; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 20, 2015; **Notice of Hearing for February 25, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note.** A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-27,235, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to change a renewable energy tax credit; and to repeal the original section. ([http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view\\_bill.php?DocumentID=24475](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24475)).

**LB583** – *Require a state energy plan.* Introduced by Schilz on January 21, 2015; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 23, 2015; **Notice of Hearing for February 11, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note.** A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the State Energy Office; to require a state energy plan; and to provide powers and duties.  
([http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view\\_bill.php?DocumentID=25072](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=25072)).

**The Wildlife Society Renewable Energy Working Group – LinkedIn.** Connect with other resource professionals involved in renewable energy – wildlife work. To join, go to:  
[http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4433729&trk=my\\_groups-b-grp-v](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4433729&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v), click Join.

Check out the **Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife Project website** at:  
<http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/> and **Wind Energy and Wildlife news** at:  
<http://www.scoop.it/t/wind-energy-and-wildlife>.

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