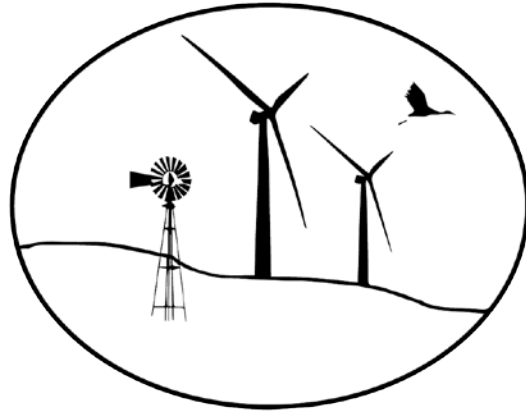


Wind Energy and Wildlife News

March 31, 2016



Announcement: This will be the final edition of Wind Energy and Wildlife News due to a position change. If there is someone interested in carrying on the newsletter, please let me know at windwildlife@gmail.com. Thank you for your interest in this topic over the past four years!

Around Nebraska...

Nebraska Legislative Bills (Updates are in red).

LB736 - *Change provisions relating to electric utilities and electric suppliers under the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act.* Introduced by Senator Friesen on 1/6/16; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on 1/7/16; Notice of Hearing for 2/4/16; Natural Resources AM2074 filed and Placed on General File with AM2074 on 2/18/16; **Natural Resources AM2074 adopted and Advanced to Enrollment Review Initial on 3/18/16; Placed on Select File, Enrollment, and Review of ER215, AM2668 Adopted, Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment on 3/22/16; Placed on Final Reading with ST74 on 3/23/16.**

LB824 - *Exempt privately developed renewable energy generation facilities from regulation as prescribed.* Introduced by Senator McCollister on 1/8/16; Referred to Natural Resource Committee on 1/11/16; Notice of Hearing for 1/27/16; Natural Resources Hearing Transcripts available; Natural Resources priority bill on 2/19/16; **Placed on General File with AM2611 on 3/16/16; AM2353 and AM2720 filed on 3/23/16; AM2611 adopted, AM2353 withdrawn, Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial on 3/24/16; Placed on Select File with ER230 and Enrollment and Review ER230 filed on 3/29/16.**

LB863 - *Adopt the Wind Energy Expansion Act.* Introduced by Senator Schilz on 1/11/16; Referred to the Natural Resources Committee on 1/12/16; Notice of Hearing for 2/4/16.

LB881 - *Change provisions relating to energy financing contracts.* Introduced by Senator Schilz on 1/11/16; Referred to the Natural Resources Committee on 1/12/16; Notice of Hearing for 1/28/16; Placed on General File on 2/19/16; **AM2543 filed on 3/10/16; AM2543 adopted and bill Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial on 3/18/16; Placed on Select File on 3/21/16; AM2669 filed and adopted, Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment on 3/22/16; Placed on Final Reading on 3/23/16.**

LB1012 - *Adopt the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act.* Introduced by Senator Mello on 1/15/16; Referred to Urban Affairs Committee on 1/20/16. Notice of Hearing for 2/9/16; Haar priority bill on 2/19/16; Urban Affairs AM2253 filed and Placed on General File on 2/24/16; **AM2602 filed on 3/16/16; Urban Affairs AM2253 adopted, AM2602 adopted, Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial, Placed on Select File with ER234, Enrollment and Review ER234 filed on 3/29/16.**

LB1047 - *Change sales tax exemption provisions relating to purchases of energy and fuel.* Introduced by Senator Harr on 1/20/16; Referred to Revenue Committee on 1/22/16. Notice of Hearing for 2/19/2016.

[LB1069](#) - *Provide duties for the state investment officer relating to investment in energy-related companies or funds.* Introduced by Senator Haar on 1/20/16; Referred to Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee on 1/22/16. Notice of Hearing for 2/9/2016; Indefinitely postponed on 2/17/16.

[LB1071](#) - *Adopt the Solar Energy Economic Development Act.* Introduced by Senator Haar on 1/20/16; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on 1/22/16. Notice of Hearing for 2/11/2016.

[LB1085](#) - *Change a renewable energy tax credit.* Introduced by Senator Davis on 1/20/16; Referred to Revenue Committee on 1/22/16; Notice of Hearing for 2/25/16.

News

[Editorial, 3/15: Wind energy rules too strict.](#) The Lancaster County Board should heed the request of a local coalition that it take another look at the super-strict noise limits it approved last year for wind turbines.

[Gage County Board Conducts Wind Energy Public Hearing.](#) About 60 people packed a Gage County Board room last night for an hours-long public hearing over proposed zoning revisions governing wind farms.

[Midlands Voices: Nebraska should embrace EPA's Clean Power Plan.](#) The University of Nebraska, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Academy of Sciences and many others have highlighted the threats that climate change poses to Nebraska. Our state's economy, built largely on agriculture and natural resources, faces disruption in weather patterns and water supplies if we fail to take action to reduce carbon pollution and prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

[As revenue falls with natural gas prices, Tenaska builds renewable energy profile.](#) Omaha-based Tenaska didn't have any investments in wind energy at that time, nor did it have any holdings in solar power, which these days are helping offset margins that have cratered with natural gas prices, the company said.

[Nebraska needs to keep energy options open.](#) At the risk of using an Easter metaphor a day too late, we'd say Nebraska is putting most of its eggs in one basket when it comes to energy. A bill to make it easier for private developers to build renewable energy facilities in Nebraska failed to make it out of committee this legislative session, so our state will continue to depend on coal for the majority of its electricity.

[Renewable energy supporters hope to advance bill.](#) Legislation attempting to remove restrictions placed on the development of wind energy in Nebraska appears to be stalled in committee, although an effort is underway to circumvent the usual path and advance the bill to a floor debate.

[Coal still Nebraska's top electric fuel despite national trend toward natural gas.](#) Natural gas may have taken over as the dominant source nationally for electrical power generation in 2016, but coal remains king in Nebraska.

[Report details Nebraska clean energy industry.](#) More than 16,000 Nebraskans work in the state's clean-energy industry, and its rate of growth in the industry is among the highest in the Midwest, according to a report released Tuesday.

[Beer, Brats, and Bats.](#) A benefit for the Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center.

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[**Prioritizing Avian Species for Their Risk of Population-Level Consequences from Wind Energy Development.**](#) We developed 3 metrics of turbine risk that incorporate data on collision fatalities at wind facilities, population size, life history, species' distributions relative to turbine locations, number of suitable habitat types, and species' conservation status. This prioritization system is a first step that will help researchers, conservationists, managers, and industry target future study and management activity.

[**Assessing spring direct mortality to avifauna from wind energy facilities in the Dakotas.**](#) Our results suggest that future wind facility siting decisions consider avoiding grassland habitats and locate turbines in pre-existing fragmented and converted habitat outside of high densities of breeding waterfowl and major migration corridors.

[**Bats in a Mediterranean Mountainous Landscape: Does Wind Farm Repowering Induce Changes at Assemblage and Species Level?**](#) *Myotis emarginatus* and *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* significantly changed their relative frequency during the three-blade wind farming activity, supporting the hypothesis that some bats may be sensitive to repowering. Further research is necessary to confirm a possible sensitivity also for locally rare bats (*Miniopterus schreibersii* and *Plecotus* sp.).

[**Addressing the Factors that Juxtapose Raptors and Wind Turbines.**](#) Journal of Raptor Research, Short Communication.

[**10 of the WORST-SITED WIND ENERGY PROJECTS FOR BIRDS.**](#) American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has identified 10 of the worst-sited wind energy projects for birds in the United States, both existing and proposed, with the intention of educating the public and key decision makers about bird impacts from wind development.

[**Predicting the offshore distribution and abundance of marine birds with a hierarchical community distance sampling model.**](#) Proposed offshore wind energy development on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf has brought attention to the need for baseline studies of the distribution and abundance of marine birds. We compiled line transect data from 15 shipboard surveys (June 2012 to April 2014), along with associated remotely-sensed habitat data, in the lower Mid-Atlantic Bight off the coast of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, USA. We implemented a recently developed hierarchical community distance sampling model to estimate the seasonal abundance of 40 observed marine bird species.

[**Settlement filed in dispute over bird safeguards at wind farm.**](#) A settlement of a lawsuit involving Montana's largest wind farm and protections for hawks and eagles has been reached between owner NaturEner USA and San Diego Gas & Electric, which is buying the power it produces.

[**Bird impact concerns delay 350-MW near-shore wind tender in Denmark.**](#) The 350-MW near-shore wind tender in Denmark has been delayed due to concerns over the potential impact on a bird species, according to an announcement yesterday by the Danish Energy Agency. A new environmental assessment of the Sejero Bugt wind zone has concluded that an impact from an offshore wind farm there on a nearby bird sanctuary could not be excluded. Sejero Bugt is one of six zones that can be targeted in the tender.

Wildlife

[Bat Fight: Environmentalists Sue Feds for Failing to Protect Bats.](#) Four environmental groups allege that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service missed a key opportunity to save threatened bats.

Wind

[Towards 100% renewable energy systems: Uncapping power system flexibility.](#) 100% VRES systems: combined analysis of all related technical and policy challenges. Transition elements: classification of the complete range of challenges in 9 elements. Development regimes: policy actions in 3 VRES penetration regimes (low-medium-high). Policies: comprehensive guideline and detailed presentation of policies per regime. Roadmap: lists of actions per regime act as transition roadmap to 100% VRES systems.

[Scientists are developing the world's biggest wind turbine.](#) While other technologies are getting smaller and smaller with each passing day, wind turbines are going in the opposite direction, because in order for them to make enough power, they need to harness more wind. Following this logic, researchers are taking turbines to a seemingly impossible scale by giving them blades that are 200 metres (656 feet) long.

[Barriers to Renewable Energy Development on Brownfields.](#) This study aims to examine the technical/environmental, regulator/financial/institutional, and social barriers to this type of development, along with measures that may address them.

[Fight to Keep Alternative Energy Local Stymies an Industry.](#) Because the bulk of the demand is hundreds of miles away, companies are working to build a robust network of high-voltage transmission lines to get the power to the coasts.

Policy

[These states are setting wind energy records – and suing over Obama’s climate plans.](#) On Tuesday, the American Wind Energy Association posted a [very interesting list](#) of new records being set by U.S. wind energy this month.

Upcoming Conferences, Trainings & Events

[Nebraska Prairie Chicken Festival,](#) April 8-10, 2016, Burwell, NE. The Nebraska Prairie Chicken Festival aims to celebrate prairie grouse species, the grasslands they inhabit and the culture that surrounds them.

[Electric Transmission 101 Workshop,](#) April 26-28, 2016, Duke Energy Environmental Center, Huntersville, NC. Contact: Kathy Boydston ([512389-8522](tel:512389-8522)). The workshop, organized by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, is designed to train state fish and wildlife agency and federal agency personnel who are involved in the review and permitting of electric transmission line projects. The workshop provides the opportunity for state and federal agency staff to meet members of the electric utility industry and gain an understanding of the planning and design process for electric transmission.

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, click Join.

Check out the Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife Project website at: <http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/>.

To unsubscribe to this listserv:

Send an e-mail message to: LISTSERV@UNL.EDU

In the Message Field (NOT Subject): UNSUBSCRIBE wind_wildlife