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Rev. Dr. Mary Mitchell



November 1, 2023

Director Drew Bohan and staff
California Energy Commission
715 "P" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Against approval of the Fountain Wind, LLC application to place wind turbines in Shasta County near Burney

Dear Director Bohan and staff,

My husband and I live on a lake in the path of one of the most magnificent migratory bird flyways in northern California. We participate in annual bird counts and the Cornell University bird feeder seasonal bird counts. We've taken hundreds of photos of the birds that grace us with their presence.

We love living so close to nature and are disheartened by the potential approval of the Fountain Wind, LLC wind farm near Burney, CA. It is unconscionable that the will of the people in that area can be thwarted by the state. Just the noise alone can be traumatic on a 24/7 basis and the loss of the migratory bird population and local bats is heart breaking.

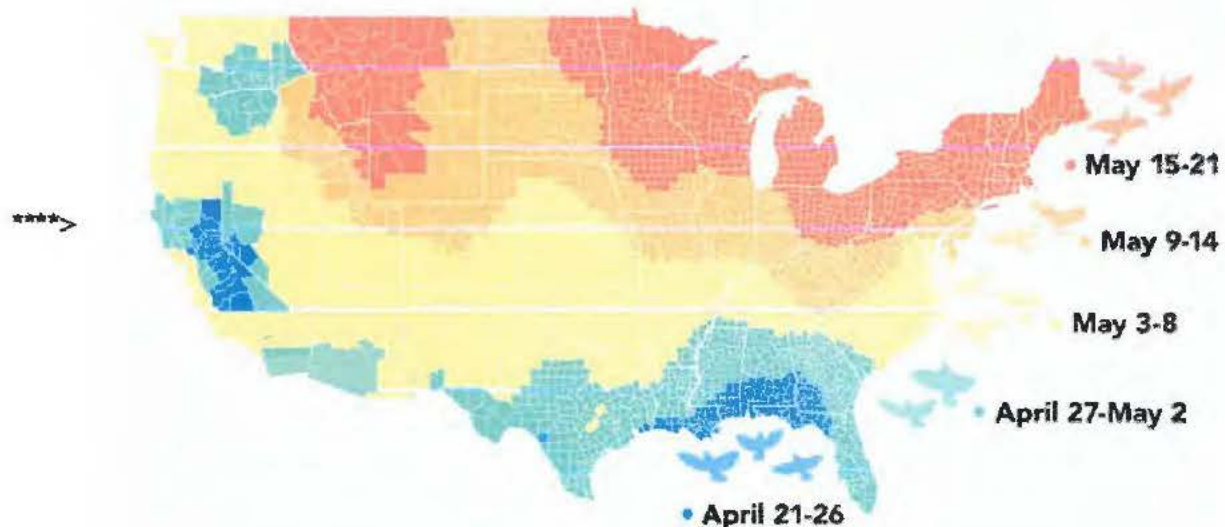
From what I've researched, in 2022 total bird deaths from collisions with turbines are estimated to be between 140,000 and 328,000 per year, including thousands of eagles, hawks, owls, other raptors and songbirds.

Most birds killed at wind turbines are songbirds. In an Energy Policy study, researchers found that the size of the turbine and the length of the blades can make a substantial difference. Just making the turbines taller and the blades shorter reduces the impact on birds, the study's authors report.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that between 140,000 and 500,000 bird deaths occur at wind farms each year. The most significant threat is posed to species of

large, threatened and high-conservation-value birds such as golden and bald eagles, which we see often here in Shasta and Tehama Counties. "Unprecedented numbers of migratory bats are found dead beneath industrial-scale wind turbines during late summer and autumn in both North America and Europe," says Paul Cryan, a research biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. "There are no other well-documented threats to populations of migratory tree bats that cause mortality of similar magnitude to that observed at wind turbines."

The BirdCast project mapped out the weeks of peak spring bird migration, defined as the periods with the highest nightly average of aerial bird density. See the map below. The data were collected from 143 radar systems from coast to coast. Note the location of Shasta and Tehama Counties below.



Since 2009, NABCI, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, has published a report every few years to track the health of breeding birds in habitats across the nation over the past five decades. The State of the Birds 2022 report for the United States focuses on the wane of bird populations across every habitat except wetlands.

A 2012 study found that wind projects kill 0.269 birds per gigawatt-hour of electricity produced. When considering the life of wind projects, this should be unacceptable to everyone. The promotion of clean and renewable energy is important, but so is the preservation of the bird population, open space, and nature.

Please protect our bird population in this valuable west coast migration area and reject this monstrous wind farm placement in Shasta County. The people living in the area do not want it and bird lovers in the flyway do not either. Check in with your hearts when

you see migratory birds in your area. Please do not contribute to their demise over decades due to this decision. Thank you for your most important consideration.

Sincerely,

Rev. Mary Mitchell

Incl. Article

Cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Commissioner David Hochschild
Commissioner Siva Gunda
Commissioner J. Andres McAllister, Ph.D.
Commissioner Patty Monahan
Commissioner Naomi O. Gallardo
Redding Record Searchlight: Local Managing Editor, Michele Chandler
Executive Editor Jenny Espino
Intermountain News, Burney, CA
A News Café, Redding, CA

Windmills Kill 10-20 times more than previously thought

An Initiative of Saint Francis Arboreal & Wildlife Association, Inc.

Wind turbines are actually slaughtering millions of birds and bats annually

The Obama administration is issuing 30-year permits for "taking" (killing) bald and golden eagles. The great birds will be legally slaughtered "unintentionally" by lethal wind turbines installed in their breeding territories, and in "dispersion areas" where their young congregate (e.g. Altamont Pass). By chance (if you believe in coincidences), a timely government study claims wind farms will kill "only" 1.4 million birds yearly by 2030. This new report is just one of many, financed with taxpayers' money, aimed at convincing the public that additional mortality caused by wind plants is sustainable. — It is not.

Dr. Shawn Smallwood's 2004 study, spanning four years, estimated that **California's Altamont Pass** wind "farm" killed an average of 116 Golden Eagles annually. This adds up to 2,900 dead "goldies" since it was built 25 years ago. Altamont is the biggest sinkhole for the species. An industry-financed research claiming that California's GE population is stable is but a white-wash and not only one. Eagles are not the only victims. Smallwood also estimated that **Altamont** killed an average of 300 red-tailed hawks, 333 American kestrels and 380 burrowing owls annually — plus even more non-raptors, including 2,526 rock doves and 2,557 western meadowlarks. In 2012, breaking the European omerta on wind farm mortality, the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO/Birdlife) reviewed actual carcass counts from 136 monitoring studies.



They concluded that Spain's 18,000 wind turbines are killing 6-18 million birds and bats yearly. Extrapolating that and similar (little publicized) German and Swedish studies, 39,000 U.S. wind turbines would not be killing "only" 440,000 birds (USFWS, 2009) or "just" 573,000 birds and 888,000 bats (Smallwood, 2013), but 13-39 million birds and bats every year! However, this carnage is being covered up by self-serving and/or politically motivated government agencies, wind industry lobbyists, environmental groups and ornithologists, under a pile of misleading studies paid for with more taxpayer money.



Wildlife expert Jim Wiegand has documented how areas searched under wind turbines are still confined to 200-foot radiuses, even though modern monster turbines catapult 80% of bird and bat carcasses much further. Windfarm owners, operating under voluntary (!) USFWS guidelines, commission studies that search much-too-small areas, look only once every 30-90 days, ensuring that scavengers remove most carcasses, and ignore wounded birds that happen to be found within search perimeters.

These research protocols are designed to guarantee extremely low mortality statistics, hiding the true death tolls – and the USFWS seems inclined to let the deception continue. In addition, bird mortality data are now considered to be the property of wind farm owners, which means the public no longer has a right to know. Nevertheless, news has leaked that eagles are being hacked to death all across America. This is hardly surprising, as raptors are attracted to wind turbines. They perch on them to rest or scan for prey. They come because turbines are often built in habitats that have abundant food (live or carrion) and good winds for gliding.

Save the Eagles International (STEI) has posted photographs of raptors perched on nacelles or nonmoving blades, and ospreys building a nest on a decommissioned turbine. Moving blades don't deter them either: videos show a turkey vulture perched on the hub of a spinning turbine, and a griffon vulture being struck. Birds perceive areas traveled by spinning blades as open space, unaware that blade tips are moving at up to 180 mph. Many are focused on prey. These factors make wind turbines "ecological death traps," wherever they are located.

By 2030, the United States plans to produce 20% of its electricity from wind. That's nearly six times as much as today, from three or four times as many turbines, striking more flying creatures due to their bigger size (even the mendacious study predicting 1.4 million bird kills recognizes this). Using the higher but still underestimated level of mortality published by Smallwood in 2013, by 2030 our wind turbines would be killing over 3 million birds and 5 million bats annually.

But this is shy of reality by a factor of ten, because 90% of casualties land outside the search perimeter and are not counted. We are thus really talking about an unsustainable death toll of 30 million birds and 50 million bats a year – and more still if we factor in other hide-the-mortality tricks documented by STEI. This carnage includes protected species that cars and cats rarely kill: eagles, hawks, falcons, owls, condors, whooping cranes, geese, bats and many others. The raptor slaughter will cause rodent populations to soar. Butchery of bats, already being decimated by White Nose Syndrome, will hammer agriculture and forestry.



The U.S. Geological Survey says the value of pest-control services to US agriculture provided by bats ranges from \$3.7 billion to as much as \$53 billion yearly. These chiropters also control forest pests and serve as pollinators. A Swedish study documents their attraction from as far as nine miles away to insects that swarm around wind turbines. Hence the slaughter. Wind lobbyists claim they need "regulatory certainty." However, eagle "take" permits will also ensure extinction certainty – and ecological, agricultural, economic, social and health disasters that we cannot afford.