

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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December 4, 2007

County Planning Directors
Address

RE: California Guidelines for Reducing Impacts to Birds and Bats from Wind Energy Development

Dear Planning Director:

We have enclosed a copy of the voluntary *California Guidelines for Reducing Impacts to Birds and Bats from Wind Energy Development (Guidelines)*, which the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) approved on September 26, 2007 at their regularly scheduled Business Meeting. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the Energy Commission developed this document to provide recommendations on methods to assess bird and bat activity at proposed wind energy sites, design pre-permitting and operations monitoring plans, and develop impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

The methods described in the *Guidelines* are suggestions for local permitting agencies to use at their discretion. These recommendations offer guidance that can be applied statewide, and are not specific to particular regions or counties in California. We therefore encourage you to integrate regional information and local studies with the study methods described in the *Guidelines*.

If you would like a quick overview of the *Guidelines*, we suggest you skim through pages 5 – 19, which is a step-by-step implementation guide highlighting the recommended process for successfully gathering information useful to the permitting process. This section takes a "how to" approach, with the steps arranged in the order they are likely to occur during project permitting. Each step corresponds to a chapter that provides additional details and background information.

The Energy Commission and CDFG will be offering workshops and training sessions on use of the *Guidelines* to provide opportunities for your staff to ask questions and as a forum for discussion with personnel from local CDFG offices. We will be contacting you soon with additional information about these workshops.

Development of the *Guidelines* was a 16-month collaborative effort involving eight public workshops in Sacramento, Bakersfield, Riverside, and Livermore, and comments on three draft versions of the *Guidelines*. More than 80 interested parties, including representatives from wind industry, resource agencies, environmental groups and other non-governmental organizations, utilities, county

planning departments and elected officials, universities and research institutes participated in these public events and/or submitted written comments on the *Guidelines*. If you are interested in reading more about the *Guidelines* development process, the Energy Commission Web site, <www.energy.ca.gov/renewables/06-Oil-1> provides summaries of workshops, transcripts of hearings, docketed comment letters, and all public review drafts of the *Guidelines*, as well as information on how to request additional hard copies.

The *Guidelines* will be updated as new research findings and user feedback indicates that revisions are needed. We hope you will provide input that will help us to revise and improve the document. If you have questions or comments, please contact Rick York, Biological Resources Unit Supervisor, at ryork@energy.state.ca.us or at (916) 654-3945.

Sincerely,

Paul Richins, Manager
Environmental Protection Office