

New England Conservation Community Perspectives on Wind Power: Defining Common Principles on Wind Power Development and the Protection of New England's Natural Heritage (January 2006)

Available on-line at:

http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/windpower/pubs/jody_jones/cons-wind-power-wpaper.pdf

The following state and regional non-governmental organizations developed this position paper for consideration by New England's conservation community:

- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Appalachian Trail Conference
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Maine Audubon
- Massachusetts Audubon
- Natural Resources Council of Maine
- The Nature Conservancy
- Union of Concerned Scientists

Alert to "the potential for conflict between the dual public values of increasing our use of renewable energy sources and protecting other environmental values", these organizations held three meetings during the summer and fall of 2005 to develop a common position on wind development that might later serve as "foundation for formulating public policy." The groups arrived a draft consensus position founded on three major principles which are "aimed at ensuring development of additional sources of renewable energy while preserving New England's significant natural and recreational resources."

Principle 3 states that "[E]ach New England state should create a coherent approach to wind power development by establishing siting policies and procedures that meet the dual objectives of tapping new renewable energy resources and protecting significant natural values." Recognizing both the impracticability of implementing the same approach in all six New England states and "considerable merit in a collaborative approach aimed at meeting renewable energy needs and natural resource conservation needs that are multi-state or regional in scope", the document further explicates principle 3 by outlining the following means "to facilitate a cohesive region-wide approach" through state-level policy and procedure:

- "Recognize the dual, high priority needs to develop substantially more wind power and to protect natural and nature-based recreational resources of state, regional, or national significance"
- "Seek to achieve balanced use of resources beyond the site-specific scale through landscape-level planning, promotion of siting proposals that respond to landscape-level plans, and design of landscape-level mitigation strategies"
- "Focus development in locations where the likelihood of conflicts with significant natural and nature-based recreational values is lower"

- "Recognize that there are some areas where any development – including wind power – should be avoided"
- "Explore different types and sizes of wind power facilities in diverse geographical settings, including terrestrial, coastal, and offshore areas"
- "Encourage placement of wind projects in more developed or ecologically disturbed areas, including urban areas, agricultural areas, and transportation and utility corridors"
- "Provide financial, regulatory, or other incentives for placement of wind power facilities in locations where impacts to significant natural and nature-based recreational values can be minimized"
- "Facilitate, guide, and accelerate wind power projects in the regulatory review process by reducing areas of conflict at the outset"
- "Collaborate with wind power developers, other stakeholders, and applicable federal agencies to create a more complete regional picture of bird and bat migration patterns and characteristics, the potential effects of wind development on these migratory species, and ways to resolve potential conflicts"
- "Encourage the collaboration and integration of federal, state, and regional wind power planning and regulation to foster a unified approach to securing considerably more energy from wind power while protecting significant natural and nature-based recreational resources"