

Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy is crucial in the effort to curb climate change and its impacts on our wildlife, their habitats, and our human communities. Beyond cutting the emission of greenhouse gasses entering the atmosphere, renewable energy development has fewer external, long-term consequences. Unlike the extraction of oil, gas, or other carbon-rich fuel sources that, once removed, take thousands of years to regenerate, renewable energy, like that generated by wind or sun, truly is replenished by nature itself, almost immediately. Harnessing that power creates less air and water pollution and fewer toxic conditions for communities and workers supporting power generation facilities. This clean energy offers essentially continuous access to electricity production. And we are fortunate that today the cost of producing renewable energy is in some cases as little as half that of producing energy using coal. But even sources of renewable energy can have negative impacts if they are built in important habitat areas or in areas supporting sensitive species. This is especially true for wind farms that may be located near Bald or Golden Eagle nesting habitat or the nesting habitat of other sensitive raptors. Fortunately, the proper siting of clean energy facilities is possible, reducing direct effects on both birds and other wildlife. Additionally, it is important to recognize the economic role developing renewable resources will play across Montana.



**The policy of Montana Audubon regarding Renewable Energy is to:**

- Educate the public and decision makers about the impact renewable energy can have in reducing the effects of climate change
- Encourage the proper siting of renewable energy facilities to avoid impacts to important fish and wildlife habitat
- Encourage the support the role of policy makers in limiting harm to the environment when development does take place, including supporting appropriate bonding and habitat mitigation/protection measures;
- Encourage clean energy facilities to have appropriate mitigation plans in place to minimize harm to birds, wildlife, and their habitat;
- Encourage decision makers to require formal, science-based, inventory of wildlife and other natural resources, like natural springs, prior to energy development, monitoring during development, and inventory/monitoring post-development to track effect,
- Encourage developers to adopt new technologies and practices that reduces harm to fish and wildlife habitat.