



Sierra Club Maine Wind Siting Policy  
(updated April 2014)

Sierra Club Maine believes that our state and nation has an obligation to address climate disruption from burning of fossil fuels by moving towards a 100% clean energy economy as soon as possible.

This necessary transition requires the implementation of two simultaneous strategies:

- Comprehensive national and statewide policies promoting energy efficiency across all sectors to reduce energy waste, demand and costs;
- Scaling up the production and use of cleaner, renewable energy technologies while phasing out energy systems requiring dirty fossil fuels, including oil and natural gas.

As one of the most oil-dependent states in the country, Maine has much to gain from both strategies. Blessed with the potential to produce much of our electricity from renewable sources, Maine has a great opportunity to lead the nation in clean renewable technologies such as wind, solar, and geothermal power.

Sierra Club is also deeply committed to protecting Maine's wilderness. We recognize that the health of Maine's special natural resources—our oceans, lakes, rivers, mountains, and woods—is seriously threatened by climate disruption. We also accept that if we are to reach our vision of a 100% clean energy economy in time to mitigate the worse effects of climate change for future generations, we must strike a sometimes difficult balance between clean energy production and environmental protection.

In this context, Sierra Club Maine supports the construction of wind power facilities at appropriate sites in Maine. We believe that decisions about siting wind (and other energy infrastructure) should be made on a case-by-case basis and in the context of sound overall land-use and environmental planning.

Before the Chapter takes a position on specific projects, we undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the particular proposal and location. Our guiding principles are provided by the following national Sierra Club's policy documents, "Wind Siting Advisory Guidance," "Energy Facility Siting Guidelines," and "Energy Resource Policy" (online at [www.sierraclub.org/policy/energy](http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/energy)).

Sierra Club Maine is opposed to energy siting locations that would threaten protection of priority natural ecosystems, and air and water quality. Furthermore, we believe that siting must be consistent with our efforts to preserve resilient and critical habitats for adaptation to climate change.

While we prefer distributed, community-scaled power generation, we understand that large scale wind projects will necessarily be part of the clean energy mix. We support siting wind offshore, on agricultural lands, and on previously developed land located near existing transmission infrastructure.

We believe it is essential to study the impacts of a particular project on critical habitat, wildlife corridors, wetlands, and riparian systems, and if necessary, adequate mitigation steps should be required.

The Chapter acknowledges that wind power development, like all energy production, has negative impacts. We believe that the issue of cumulative impact on the landscape needs to be addressed as soon as possible. We think that the State needs to clearly define the areas where energy development is not going to be considered and will be protected as wilderness. Maine Audubon's 2014 wind power and habitat mapping project (<https://maineaudubon.org/wildlife-habitat/wind-power-and-wildlife/>) may be a good place to start in developing this policy.

We also strongly recommend that permanent land conservation be required of every mitigation plan presented by a wind power developer. Finally, we urge the federal government to approve turbine lighting systems that only light up at night when aircraft is approaching, and we recommend that, once approved, this mitigation effort should be required for every wind power project going forward.

The Maine Chapter supports the Governor's Task Force 2008 final report on wind power development and the state's Wind Policy Act. We do not support expedited permitting because we believe that the state should have an energy facility siting mechanism with open and complete processes which may preclude a specific review time limit.