

*The Good Life
Means Wildlife!!*



June 8, 2015

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Dear Colleagues,

We understand Lancaster County is considering new rules that would deal with issues surrounding the siting of new wind farms. We have long been a supporter of wind, solar, energy efficiency and other clean energy sources of energy, and have been urging Nebraska's electric utilities to replace their powerplants powered by fossil fuels like coal with clean energy sources of energy.

Burning fossil fuels to generate electricity -- especially coal, which is currently burned in the Sheldon Station powerplant near Hallam -- results in substantial health and environmental costs from the sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxides, particulates, mercury and other air pollutants, along with water pollution, fly ash, and of course gases like carbon dioxide that contribute to climate change. The research is clear that air pollution from electric power plants like Sheldon Station is linked to asthma, heart disease and other ailments in nearby communities like Lincoln.

We understand that every energy source involves trade-offs, and we commend you for working to understand those trade-offs and to mitigate any health and environmental impacts.

We believe wind farms and other renewable energy will play an increasingly important role in our community and state, and in our nation's energy future. We also recognize that not every location in Nebraska is ideal with respect to wind energy siting. With that in mind:

* We urge the County to avoid enacting wind farm siting restrictions so onerous as to make it impossible to site wind farms anywhere in the County.

* Any restrictions on wind farm siting designed to address health impacts should be based on unbiased, peer-reviewed science, and should not single out the wind industry for standards that other commercial, industrial or agricultural operations are not required to meet.

* With respect to wildlife, the County should defer to the state and federal agency wildlife experts (the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service). We urge you to adopt rules that simply require that wind farms sited in Lancaster County abide by the recommendations of state and federal wildlife agencies with respect to siting and mitigation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on these important issues.

Yours in Conservation,

Duane Hovorka, Executive Director