



RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS Audubon Texas supports the responsible development of non-carbon producing alternative energy sources in environmentally acceptable locations and with appropriate environmental safeguards; and

WHEREAS the location of the proposed wind farm on the Kenedy Ranch in Kenedy County is in one of most important migratory corridors for neotropical migrant songbirds, migrant waterfowl and migrant raptors in North America; and

WHEREAS there have not yet been well designed and scientifically valid studies of bird movements in the vicinity of wind farms in major migratory corridors, covering all seasons for an adequate period of time and this wind farm has significant potential to have negative population impacts on a number of different bird species;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Audubon Texas opposes any further development of this proposed wind farm and other wind farms in critical migratory corridors along the Texas coast.

OP-ED – KENEDY COUNTY WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT – May 2008

Wind Energy is trying to keep a “green” image, but wind farms in development along the Texas coast may jeopardize that distinction.

Three major migration corridors for neotropical-nearctic migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere merge on the Texas Coast. Millions of individuals of many species, whose populations are in serious decline, fly along these same routes twice per year- more commonly known as the spring and fall migration.

These birds are traveling between wintering grounds in Mexico, Central and South America and breeding grounds in the U.S. and Canada. Some choose to follow the coastline of the Western Gulf of Mexico before turning inward along the Texas coast. Others fly non-stop directly across the Gulf from the Yucatan or northern South America to the Texas coast, where they often immediately land due to exhaustion or bad weather.

Two companies, PPM and Babcock and Brown, are in the process of developing a wind farm in Kenedy County with as many as 500 turbines reaching upwards of 400 feet into the sky right along this critically important migration corridor.

Their argument is that existing wind farms in the U.S. cause relatively few mortalities; therefore, these should be no different. The problem is there are no wind farms at a site such as this, where literally millions of migrants pass each year.

Audubon Texas opposes the wind projects proposed in Kenedy County and other sites along the Texas Coast due to potential bird collision mortalities that may have negative impacts on entire species populations.

Putting turbines in such an intensely used migratory corridor sets the stage for disaster on the day when thousands of birds are flying into shore and encounter storms, fog, or wind forcing them to fly low and/or land, putting them directly in harms way. Many of these species are already experiencing population reductions for a variety of reasons, and this could be a critical factor in pushing some species into dangerous declines.

Audubon Texas has supported and worked with the wind industry, seeing wind as a valuable alternative in the growing energy crisis. Texas is now the largest producer of wind energy in the U.S. Few if any issues have been raised by Audubon concerning existing wind facilities across the state.

However, Audubon opposes the wind projects proposed in Kenedy County and other sites along the Texas Coast. Putting turbines in such an intensely used migratory corridor sets the stage for disaster for birds and potentially ruins the credibility of wind

energy as a “green” alternative. It may be clean, but if it kills wildlife it surely can’t be green.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A-B' with a stylized flourish.

Anne Brown
Executive Director, Audubon Texas
Vice-President, National Audubon Society

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew C. Kasner' with a long, sweeping flourish.

Dr. Andrew Kasner
Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Texas