



May 6, 2008

The Honourable Ed Stelmach  
Premier of Alberta  
Room 307 Legislature Bldg  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
Canada  
T5K 2B6

VIA COURIER

Dear Premier Stelmach:

In light of the fact that Alberta is Canada's leader in terms of installed wind energy capacity and that this development has delivered jobs and investment to rural Alberta while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the Canadian Wind Energy Association is extremely disappointed by your recent comment comparing the deaths of birds in an oilsands tailing pond with bird fatalities associated with wind turbines in the United States.

Without the provision of any context, your comment has likely led some people to believe that wind power generation has a much greater impact on bird populations than is actually the case. In reality:

- Wind turbines kill very few birds compared with other potential threats to bird populations. The US study that suggested that 30,000 birds are killed annually by wind turbines in the United States also concluded that less than 1 of every 10,000 bird fatalities in the US is caused by a wind turbine. Of every 10,000 bird fatalities in the US, it is estimated that 5,820 are caused by buildings/windows, 1,370 by high-tension lines, 1,060 by household cats and 850 by vehicles.
- The number of birds killed by Alberta wind turbines is small, in the range of 150 birds per year. Across Canada, it is estimated that roughly 1,000 birds are killed each year at operating wind farms, for an average of 1 bird per turbine per year.
- These facts have led a number of prominent bird conservation groups to voice their support for wind as climate change is broadly recognized to be the greatest emerging threat to bird populations. For example, the National Audubon Society has stated that "on balance, Audubon strongly supports wind power as a clean alternative energy source that reduces the threat of global warming".

- All proposed wind farms must undergo exhaustive Environmental Assessments to ensure that they will not have adverse impacts on avian species, particularly migratory birds and endangered species.

Wind energy is poised to play a rapidly increasing role in meeting the electricity needs of Albertans. We continue to work with the Alberta Electricity System Operator and your government to ensure that this development maximizes economic and environmental benefits for Albertans in providing a cost competitive commodity. In that context, it is important that Albertans are well informed about wind energy and its potential role in Alberta's energy future.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss why wind energy is a strategic resource for Alberta that we should be seeking to develop as quickly as possible. I would like to take this opportunity to formally request a meeting to provide you with an overview of Alberta's wind energy potential.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Hornung".

Robert Hornung,  
President  
Canadian Wind Energy Association

Cc: David Huggill, Policy Advisor – Western Canada (CanWEA)