

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

To: Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy, George Heyman | ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Wind Energy Development and Wildlife Considerations

Dear Minister Heyman,

BC Nature is a province-wide, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of British Columbia's natural heritage. Representing a network of 64 naturalist clubs and 7000+ members across the province, BC Nature works to advance science-based conservation, protect species at risk, and promote responsible stewardship of ecosystems. Through research, advocacy, education, and collaboration, we strive to ensure that biodiversity conservation remains a central consideration in land and resource decision-making across British Columbia.

BC Nature recognizes the important role that renewable energy, including wind power, plays in addressing climate change. At the same time, we are concerned about the recent rescinding of environmental assessments for nine wind energy projects approved by the Province of British Columbia.

While we appreciate assurances that high environmental standards will be upheld, BC Nature remains concerned about instances where mitigation and monitoring requirements have been relaxed or reduced following project approval. Feedback from naturalists and conservation communities across British Columbia indicates that this issue has, at times, undermined confidence in regulatory processes and raised concerns about the long-term protection of wildlife.

BC Nature emphasizes that mitigation and monitoring requirements must be clearly defined, enforceable, and maintained throughout the full lifecycle of wind energy projects, without exception or rollback. Wind energy development can have measurable impacts on wildlife. Across Canada, estimates suggest that wind turbines are responsible for tens of thousands of bird fatalities annually, with projections indicating that these numbers may increase as wind energy capacity expands. For example, the Wolfe Island Wind Farm on Lake Ontario has recorded one of the highest avian fatality rates in North America, highlighting the importance of careful site selection, particularly in areas of high ecological value such as Important Bird Areas.

Research across North America also indicates that bat fatalities at wind energy facilities may exceed bird fatalities, particularly along forested ridge systems. These findings underscore the need for continued research and improved mitigation strategies.

BC Nature is concerned about the potential biophysical impacts of current and future wind energy developments, including:

- Mortality due to collisions with turbine blades, particularly among migratory birds, raptors, and bats
- Disorientation and attraction caused by aviation lighting, increasing mortality risks
- Disturbance to large mammals (e.g., caribou and mountain sheep), including potential displacement from critical habitats
- Increased human access through roads, leading to additional pressures from recreation and resource use



In addition to turbine-related impacts, associated infrastructure development can result in habitat alteration. This includes the construction of roads, transmission lines, substations, and operational facilities, which may contribute to:

- Habitat fragmentation and displacement of wildlife
- Increased human access into previously undisturbed areas
- Noise disturbance during construction, operation, and decommissioning
- Localized environmental changes, including effects on microclimates and surface conditions

BC Nature supports a balanced approach to wind energy development that prioritizes both climate action and biodiversity conservation. This includes:

- Careful site selection that avoids ecologically sensitive areas
- Implementation of bird- and bat-safe technologies and operational practices
- Meaningful collaboration with First Nations, conservation organizations, and scientific experts
- **Robust, enforceable environmental monitoring and adaptive management frameworks that are maintained throughout the full lifecycle of projects and not subject to post-approval relaxation**

We have attached a detailed summary of our observations and recommendations and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these considerations further. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nancy Flood, Ph.D.
President, BC Nature

Cc:

Minister of Energy & Climate Solutions – Adrian Dix | EMLI.Minister@gov.bc.ca
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Premier of British Columbia – David Eby | Premier@gov.bc.ca