

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing to share our concerns about the draft Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines and Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently proposed for land-based wind energy development. Specifically, these guidelines differ substantially from the recommendations made by the Wind Turbine Guidelines Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) submitted to you in March 2010. Although these guidelines are voluntary, they could still set a precedent for standards that will create unnecessary complications for wind energy projects. The differences are significant and potentially troubling for the continued development of wind resources in America.

First, let us explain the due diligence undertaken by the FAC. The FAC was composed of representatives from state governments, wildlife conservation organizations, scientists, and the wind energy industry, that participated for more than two and a half years to provide advice to the Department of Interior (DOI) on wind energy guidelines. These guidelines were meticulously drafted and based on peer reviewed science. They embody a balanced approach to managing wind-wildlife interaction, and in so doing represent an appropriate approach with respect to this nationally important industry.

Unfortunately, the FWS draft document deviates in several significant ways from the unanimous consensus document submitted by the FAC. We urge DOI to carefully review all comments made by the FAC during the public comment period, and work with the FAC to ensure that the guidelines better reflect the FAC recommendations. We hope that the FWS published guidance document will remain as consistent with the FAC recommendations to the extent possible.

We understand that the 2009 Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance is designed to provide the Fish and Wildlife Service with additional flexibility to provide permits under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. However, it is our hope that the FWS will consider carefully the potential implications of a limited menu of mitigation options for wind developers with respect to the 2009 Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance. We would urge FWS to expand the menu of mitigation options, and explore opportunities for wind developers to protect or improve

significant habitats as part of a permit that might allow the take of a specified number of eagles. We would also urge FWS to consider revising the 2009 eagle permit rules so they more closely reflect the permit rules under the Endangered Species Act, while remaining consistent with statutory requirements under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

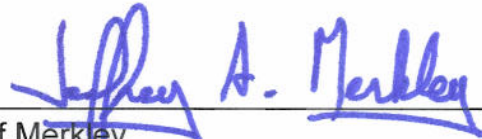
We appreciate your attention to our concerns regarding the guidance documents, and we would request that you provide regular updates to us on how FWS is addressing the concerns in this letter as they revise these draft documents. We appreciate DOI's efforts to develop renewable energy projects while minimizing their impact on the environment, and believe that a final iteration of guidelines that enable both wind energy deployment and wildlife protection are well within reach.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

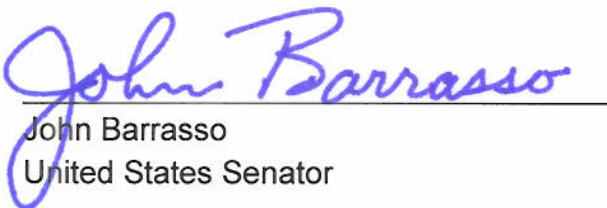
Sincerely,



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



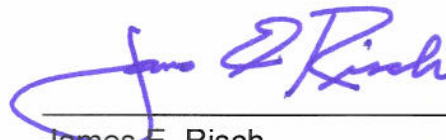
John Barrasso
United States Senator



Max Baucus
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Dean Heller
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Mark Udall
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



Tim Johnson
United States Senator



Mike Lee
United States Senator



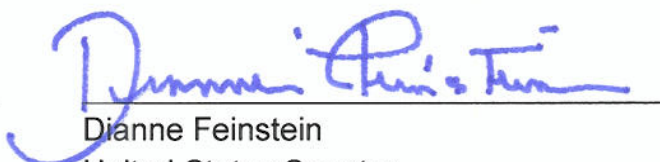
James Inhofe
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Mike Enzi
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Michael Bennet
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator