



## The Wilderness Society's Principles for Responsible Renewable Energy Development

*Sustaining wildlands and meeting our energy needs*

For more than 70 years The Wilderness Society has worked to maintain the integrity of America's wilderness and public lands. More than ever before, our nation's growing addiction to fossil fuels and unprecedented threats brought about by global warming are putting our wildlands at risk.

It is clear that to sustain both our wildlands and our well-being, we must transition away from fossil fuels and move to a clean energy future. No single clean energy strategy will achieve this and inaction would be even more destructive. Rather, we must act together to support a comprehensive solution for a sustainable energy future by prioritizing:

- **Energy Efficiency First:** eliminating waste and moderating demand for energy through enhanced conservation practices and more energy efficient technologies,
- **Right-sized Renewables:** rapidly developing and deploying clean, renewable energy technologies at a local scale where people live and work, such as rooftop solar, and large utility-scale renewable energy projects where appropriate, and
- **Preserve Ecosystem Health:** continuing to restore and preserve intact and healthy ecosystems which provide us with clean air and water and refuge for both humans and wildlife.

Energy development undoubtedly affects the health, stability, integrity, and beauty of our land and water. This is true for renewable energy development as well as fossil fuel development. The difference is that renewable energy does not emit massive amounts of global warming pollution. With our abundant supply of sun, wind and geothermal heat from the earth, renewables can be a long-term, sustainable energy solution that will help to displace our costly reliance on fossil fuels and lead the nation to a cleaner, more natural and wilder future.

In addition to our mission to protect our nation's spectacular wild places and encourage new energy efficiency and conservation measures, The Wilderness Society is committed to advocating for responsible renewable energy development that is guided by the following key principles:

- **Brownfields Before Greenfields:** land that has already been developed for industrial, agricultural, or other intensive human uses, such as brownfields, should be preferred for development over ecologically-intact public lands, and some lands are not appropriate for any kind of development.
- **Let the Land Help:** renewable energy projects on public lands must avoid impairing the ability of public lands to address the causes and consequences global warming by sequestering carbon and facilitating ecological adaptation.
- **Minimize Harm:** wherever development occurs on our public lands, developers should be required to avoid adverse effects wherever possible and minimize, or in some cases offset unavoidable impacts.
- **Transmission for the Transition:** transmission development on public lands should avoid impacts to important wildlands and support transport of renewable energy over new fossil fuel generation sources.
- **The Public Cares:** When renewable energy projects are proposed, the review process should be open and transparent, with ample opportunities for public involvement. The legal and regulatory processes should be subject to thorough review, with no shortcuts and no unnecessary delays.

We believe that creating a future where we can meet America's energy needs and achieve our land conservation goals is not only possible, but is our responsibility as stewards of the natural world. There is much we can do to shape our clean energy future: curbing consumption, prioritizing responsible development and preserving intact ecosystems will benefit the American people and further our pledge to wildness.

*For more information, please contact:*

The Wilderness Society BLM Action Center, 1660 Wynkoop, Suite 850, Denver, CO 80202 (303) 650-5818 [blmactioncenter@tws.org](mailto:blmactioncenter@tws.org) or  
Chase Huntley, Policy Advisor, Energy and Climate Change, 1615 M St. NW, Washington, DC, 20036 (202) 429-7431 [chase\\_huntley@tws.org](mailto:chase_huntley@tws.org)