



## Renewables: Our key to a clean, green energy future

**The time to harness the power of the sun, the wind and other sources of clean, renewable energy is now.**

As global warming threatens our health and the integrity of the Earth that sustains us, America is more dependent on polluting fossil fuels than ever before. **Overall demand for energy is expected to increase 50 percent over the next 25 years**, and now is our opportunity to ensure that greater demand for energy doesn't have a greater impact on our planet.

Along with serious efforts to conserve energy and increase efficiency, **we need to act quickly** to develop clean, renewable energy to replace carbon-emitting energy sources, stemming the awaiting catastrophe of global warming.

Developing renewable energy is an opportunity not just to help stop global warming, **but to create a sustainable energy future.** Right now there is a chance to decide how our public lands will support renewable energy production and transmission.

The Wilderness Society believes that with responsible planning, it is possible to develop renewable energy in a manner that will respect and preserve our public wildlands, wildlife habitat, our air, our water and the West's vast open spaces and natural heritage.

To harness the great potential of this opportunity, **we must do it right.**

Our wildest public lands should remain free of the impacts of all energy development, renewable or otherwise. There are many other places, including public, state, private, and tribal lands, that can accommodate wind, solar and geothermal energy production.

Before we consider building in undeveloped areas, lands that have already been impacted by development for other uses should be considered.

If renewables are developed on public lands, the developers must offset the impacts. It is also critical that we take steps to ensure that construction of power lines on public lands will minimize negative impacts and support renewable energy above other fossil fuel-generated power.

As we shape our clean energy future, we must ensure that developing renewable energy does not unduly impair our public lands or exacerbate the causes or consequences of global warming.

**With a solid vision and great ingenuity, we can create clean energy that will ensure future generations will enjoy America's natural heritage as we do today.**

**Fact:**

**Energy efficiency protects public lands.**

If the U.S. were to reach high, but achievable, levels of energy efficiency in the West, the Western Governors Association says nearly 30 percent of the projected need of 4,000 miles of new power lines in the region could be eliminated.

**Fact:**

**Our thirst for fossil fuels is increasing.**

On our present course, by 2030, we will import 4 million more barrels of petroleum per day than we did in 2005, and our energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will have increased by more than 25 percent, according to the WGA.

**Fact:**

**The U.S. currently generates a limited amount of renewable energy, but there is vast potential.**

Our nation currently gets less than 2% of its electricity from wind, solar and geothermal sources. This could change rapidly, however – the National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that the total potential for solar resource in the southwest alone is nearly seven times the current total U.S. electricity production. Where this potential coincides with proper siting lies huge opportunity.