

The Wilderness Society • Defenders of Wildlife • Natural Resources Defense Council
Sierra Club • Sonoran Institute • Islands Energy Coalition • Western Resources Advocates
American Wind Energy Association • Solar Energy Industries Association • Audubon Society
Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies • Western Grid Group
Renewable Northwest Project • Interwest Energy Alliance • Vote Solar • Union of Concerned Scientists

April 12, 2013

Dear Representative:

As project developers, utilities, and conservation and environmental organizations representing millions of ratepayers, members, and supporters, we are writing to request your support of a programmatic request for the Department of the Interior's New Energy Frontier initiative for renewable energy. The Department of the Interior's Fiscal Year 2014 budget request is \$96.9 million for this program. This funding would be used among six bureaus within the Department of the Interior for renewable energy permitting, leasing and planning activities, as well as environmental studies and consultations to help ensure projects avoid and minimize conflicts with other important uses, including recreation and conservation.

Consistent funding of these programs is essential to ensure that the multiple benefits of clean energy development, including the increased economic growth associated with such deployment, can be fully realized. Adequate agency level funding ensures that important conservation reviews occur, allowing responsible projects to move forward without delay.

This funding is needed for renewable energy planning and project level review to proceed without delay. In particular, funding for the renewable energy portion of the New Energy Frontier helps to support the following important efforts across the Department:

- Fish and Wildlife Service: \$14.1 million total for the Consultation, Planning and Enforcement programs, which includes increases of \$1.5 million for Endangered Species consultation to ensure renewable energy projects can move forward while not significantly harming listed species, \$1.4 million for scientific research into the impacts of energy transmission and development on wildlife and habitat, \$2.8 million for Conservation Planning Assistance, \$750,000 for Migratory Bird Management and \$750,000 for the Office of Law Enforcement. These much needed funds will help ensure agencies can keep pace with demand for review on public and private lands so that renewable energy projects are developed and operated in a way that prevents harm to species such as golden eagles and desert tortoise.
- Bureau of Land Management: \$29.1 million for the Renewable Energy subactivity to support regional land use planning studies and environmental reviews of potential solar energy development areas. These funds will ensure timely completion of project-level reviews, and support identification of future renewable energy areas with comparably low conflicts with

sensitive natural and cultural resources, including wildlife conflicts, through efforts like the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan in California.

- Bureau of Indian Affairs: \$8.3 million to support development of renewable energy on Indian Trust lands, including technical assistance and grants from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- United States Geological Survey: \$9.9 million for Energy Resources (renewable energy) for various studies. Funding for scientific research to establish baselines and study impacts is critical to developing cost-effective management and mitigation strategies
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management: \$34.4 million for the Renewable Energy activity. This finding will support development of offshore commercial wind projects and implementation of new renewable energy leasing program.
- Bureau of Reclamation: \$1.1 million for Sustainable Hydropower which will help to optimize hydropower plant efficiencies, investigate hydro-pump storage projects to help integrate electricity from large wind and solar projects into the grid.

Decisions made on budget priorities will shape how fast, how well, and ultimately how much needed renewable energy gets built. By providing adequate funding to ensure that environmentally responsible projects are permitted without delay, this programmatic request helps support the nearly 175,000 Americans employed in the solar and wind industries. When combined with biomass and geothermal development, this number nearly doubles.

We respectfully request your support in funding these essential programs at levels necessary to ensure new American energy will be built in a swift and sustainable fashion.

Sincerely,

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