

Dear Chairman Soliday, Chairman Koch, and Members of the 21st Century Energy Policy Development Task Force,

Audubon Great Lakes, a regional office of National Audubon Society, has more than 27,000 members across Indiana, including 11 chapter affiliates. On behalf of our supporters, we are writing to urge you to take bipartisan action to move our state toward achieving net-zero emissions economy-wide by 2050.

While our core mission is ensuring a safe habitat for the state's bird population, we also recognize that a multi-faceted plan to move toward a carbon-free future will bring benefits to all corners of our state and all who call it home, especially those in rural areas where agriculture is a primary economic driver. We are grateful for this Task Force and the work of its members to protect Hoosiers, improve Indiana's environmental landscape, and prepare us for generations to come.

Audubon supports properly sited transmission lines, which are critical to both delivering energy from renewable sources to consumers as well as improving the diversity and reliability of a region's generation mix. Transmission lines should be sited and managed to minimize impacts to birds while ensuring Hoosiers realize the economic and environmental benefits from these infrastructure projects. Where possible, Audubon supports the undergrounding of high-voltage lines to reduce the impact to birds and lower the risk of damage from storms, wildfires and outages from bird strikes.

In addition to undergrounding lines when possible, Audubon supports recommendations from the [Avian Power Line Interaction Committee \(APLIC\)](#) to reduce mortality, including marking power lines, managing surrounding lands, changing the size or configuration of wires to prevent electrocutions, and burying lines when practical. Audubon co-founded APLIC in 1989 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Audubon also supports research on avian interactions with transmission lines. Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary in Nebraska—where hundreds of thousands of Sandhill Cranes winter and occasional Whooping Cranes stopover in migration—was the site of an experiment in lighting transmission lines with quasi-ultraviolet light when weather or low light made the lines less visible to cranes. This resulted in a 98% reduction in collisions of cranes with the transmission lines and a path forward to potentially minimizing impacts on this species elsewhere.

Currently, less than 10 percent of Indiana's energy comes from renewable sources. Audubon Great Lakes polling released earlier this year showed overwhelming support from Indiana voters – across all party lines – for more renewable energy in the state. Nearly three-quarters of voters (74 percent) favor expanding the use of renewable energy sources.

Effectively sited transmission will benefit Indiana's wildlife and facilitate deployment of additional renewable energy in the state. By implementing lessons learned from other projects and facilitating additional research, Indiana can help protect birds like the Sandhill Crane while supporting broadly popular ideas like helping to expand the deployment of renewable energy sources across the state. AGL looks forward to working with this committee to identify bipartisan solutions that protect birds and the places they need.

Adam Forrer
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Audubon Great Lakes