

**TUCSON
AUDUBON
SOCIETY**



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conservation

education

recreation

July 12, 2006

Commissioner Mike Gleason
Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Commissioner Gleason:

I am writing on behalf of the Tucson Audubon Society, and its 3000+ member households, to comment on the Arizona Corporation Commission's recent discussion of renewable energy standards. As an organization dedicated to improving the quality of the environment, Tucson Audubon considers conservation to be the top priority in building a sustainable future. Whether the topic is energy, water, or land, conservation is our first line of defense. It costs less to conserve the resources we have and use them wisely, than to create new infrastructure for excessive demand.

After conservation, the use of renewal energy appropriate to Arizona's natural resources is the most sensible way to meet Arizona's future energy needs. The proposed goal of 15% renewables by 2025 is a tremendous improvement over current standards. However, could we do better?

Other western states have set significantly more aggressive targets without the solar opportunities we have in Arizona. For example, Montana is seeking 15% by 2015 and Nevada 20% by that same date. California anticipates reaching 20% by 2017 and Hawaii 20% by 2020. With an abundance of solar energy in Arizona, we wonder if we could set a more aggressive goal over a shorter time frame. Advances in flexible solar voltaic technology promise greater adaptability and lower prices for consumers. While some renewable technologies require more study, solar energy's reliability has been well documented. It is a clean source of energy that can contribute to sustainability.

As Arizona's economy increasingly looks to tourism as a source of revenue, the environment, and its preservation, becomes ever more critical. Bird watching brings more tourists to the state than golf and, more importantly, these tourists leave behind much-needed revenue without increasing the burden on our water resources. In seeking to preserve the environment, we must consider renewable energy as a cornerstone of this focus. We urge you to lead the effort. Arizona's renewable energy goal can be a model for the rest of the nation to follow.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this, or other matters of conservation concern.

With warm regards,


Sonja Macys
Executive Director

CC: Honorable Congressman Raul Grijalva
Honorable Governor, Janet Napolitano
Arizona Audubon Council