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The Mammal Technical Committee (MTC) of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey recognizes the need and desire to promote a clean renewable source of energy for the future. Wind energy offers such promise, and is being widely considered within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. However, the development of this industry also has been shown to be extremely hazardous to wildlife, especially bats.

Bats are the major predators of night flying insects in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States. As such, they are keystone species whose impact on the environment is strongly linked to many other plants and animals. These include humans both in biological and economic terms. It is estimated that the value of the insect control that bats provide in the U.S. is in the billions of dollars annually. Bats are already declining throughout the U.S. With their exceptionally low reproductive rates, further declines in bat numbers should be a point of deep concern for all.

After reviewing the growing evidence from locations in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Tennessee, the MTC strongly concurs with the position of Bat Conservation International (BCI) that the impact of wind power facilities on wildlife is severe. Even by the most conservative estimates, tens of thousands of bats are being killed by wind turbines in these states each year.

The cumulative effect on bats from such sites could be devastating. Further development of wind power facilities can not be condoned until solutions are found to minimize the effect of these turbines on bats. We fully support the need to develop research and the appropriate monitoring of mortality of bats at existing sites for this purpose. Minimally, the environmental impact on bats should be examined and included as a factor in any site selection being considered for future wind turbine construction.

Specifically, we recommend the commonwealth of Pennsylvania require companies to have adequate pre-construction monitoring of bat activity levels for at least 2-3 years prior to construction, follow-up studies during construction, and monitoring of bat kills for a minimum of 2-3 years after construction. Because of carcass scavenging, these surveys need to be done on a regular basis and are especially critical during the migration season. In addition, the development of a standardized methodology for these surveys would allow for between-site comparisons. With commitment from the wind energy industry to work with the scientific community to find solutions to the bat kill problems associated with wind turbines, the impact of wind farms on

wildlife can be minimized. This commitment would only strengthen the development of wind power as a safe, renewable source of energy for the future.

Sincerely,

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