



Steve Moyer, Vice President Government Affairs, Trout Unlimited

Testimony on H.R. 2663, the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2663

House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

July 13, 2016

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Lowenthal, and members of the subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 2663, the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act. My name is Steve Moyer. I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for Trout Unlimited. My testimony will share with you the perspective of the sportsmen's community on public land wind and solar development, and how H.R. 2663 can help set us on a path to responsible energy development that accounts for the interests of hunters and anglers, and the fish and wildlife habitat we depend on.

Thank you for holding this hearing prior to the summer break. We know that time is a valuable commodity for the Subcommittee this week, and we, and the many supporters of the bill, much appreciate your investment of time into the bill and the hearing.

First, I would like to share a bit of the story that accompanies this legislation. The Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act has been introduced in every Congress since 2011, with broad and bipartisan support. In addition to sportsmen and outdoor recreation groups, the bill is backed by the Western Governors' Association, the National Association of Counties, and numerous state associations of counties from across the west. This diverse set of interests mirrors the spectrum of congressional support that exists for the bill. Currently, H.R. 2663 has 65 cosponsors, comprised of nearly an even number of Republicans and Democrats.

The bill received a hearing in front of this very same committee almost two years ago to the day. Oddly enough, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee heard their version of the bill on that same summer day in 2014. The following year, the Senate again heard and responded favorably to the legislation. Now, this legislation, at least in part, is included in Sen. Murkowski's energy bill, S. 2012.

Given the broad and bipartisan support for this bill as well as its legislative record, and all of the stakeholders anxious to realize its benefits, I urge the committee to consider this legislation with an eye on finding a path forward for it this year.

While the number of wind and solar projects on public lands hardly compares with traditional oil and gas development, renewable technologies are here, and their presence on the western landscape continues to grow. Over the past 7 years, the BLM alone has approved nearly 15,000 MWs of wind and solar energy; enough electricity to power upwards of 6 million American homes.

TU supports responsible energy development on public lands. We take pride in our efforts to work with traditional energy developers and federal land managers to ensure that development occurs in a manner that accounts for fish and wildlife.

It is important to understand the context for energy development on public lands. Numerous stressors on the western landscape affect fish and wildlife habitat and hunting and angling opportunity. These include: traditional energy development, insect and disease outbreaks, intense and more frequent wildfire, invasive plants, private land development, and drought conditions in already over-subscribed basins. If we're going to add large-scale wind and solar development to this picture it must be done in a thoughtful way.

Processes such as the Interior Department's Solar Programmatic EIS, which identified zones suitable for development, provide us with a solid foundation to make good siting decisions and help minimize impacts to fish and wildlife habitat. Still, large-scale wind and solar projects will take up big chunks of land for long periods of time, and some impacts will be unavoidable. The Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act provides an answer to this challenge.

The bill offers a way to offset unavoidable impacts on fish, wildlife, and water resources by creating a conservation fund derived from royalties and other revenues from public land wind and solar energy development. This fund is essential to our ability to maintain opportunities to hunt and fish on public lands, which are some of the best in the country. More importantly, it is a must have tool for conserving critical habitat for fish and wildlife across the public landscape. In most western states, public lands comprise more than 70 percent of the available habitat for trout, and virtually all of the strongholds for native trout.

The conservation fund would be used in regions where renewable energy development takes place so that work can be done to restore public land and water resources. For example, planting riparian vegetation could be done to minimize runoff in to streams and also provide nesting habitat for bird and game. Projects to enhance instream flow and habitat could be used to support sensitive populations of native trout and salmon.

Where access points to hunting and fishing opportunities are lost due to wind and solar project development, new access points with well well-groomed trails could be constructed. If we have the resources to do these types of activities we'll be able to balance wind and solar development with fishing and hunting opportunities on a landscape scale.

Finding a balance between wind and solar development and the conservation of fish and wildlife on public lands is essential to the future of renewable energy on public lands. Wind and solar offer the prospect of much-needed jobs and increased energy security for our nation. We need for these benefits to coexist with the outstanding cultural and economic benefits of hunting and fishing. A survey by the Fish & Wildlife Service found that 91.1 million U.S. residents fished, hunted, or wildlife watched in 2011, and they spent \$145 billion on their activities. This is a large, and growing, contributor to our economy: 11 percent more people fished in 2011 than in 2006, and 9 percent more people hunted. We need high quality, accessible habitat to sustain this economic activity. The conservation fund created by the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act would support the work needed to maintain our public land natural resource values.

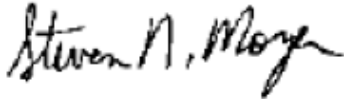
The sportsmen's community is one that is naturally inclined to work collaboratively to solve problems. Trout Unlimited's 150,000 members annually dedicate more than 600,000 volunteer hours to conservation. Hunters and anglers are strong conservationists, and our members take great pride and joy in planting trees along streams, removing invasive plants, or working with agencies to reconnect streams. The Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act, by providing the resources needed to do on-the-ground habitat restoration work in the field, will help position the sportsmen's community as partners as wind and solar projects are built on public lands.

At its core, H.R. 2663 promotes collaboration, and strives to find opportunity in imperfect situations. These same ideals permeate Trout Unlimited's work. In Colorado and Pennsylvania, we clean up abandoned mines and get native trout back into streams where they had been wiped out for decades. In Montana and Idaho we work with ranchers to conserve water and restore trout to streams that had previously run dry. In Wyoming we partner with landowners to improve old water diversion structures and enable fish to reach upstream habitat. These projects start with the idea that we can make things better than they are today, and they succeed through hard work and cooperation. In dealing with the challenges that come with new energy development, and with the help of the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act, we can achieve similar success, and more.

H.R. 2663 will allow us to develop energy resources, bolster local economies, diversify county revenue streams, and make public land fishing and hunting better than we found it. In addition to these merits, I again urge you to consider the bill's broad and bipartisan support and to find a path forward for it this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We appreciate the leadership of Representative Gosar on this issue. Thank you to the Chairman and Ranking Member for holding this hearing, and thank you to the 14 members of the subcommittee who have signed on as cosponsors. We look forward to working with all of you to advance the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven N. Moyer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'M'.

Steve Moyer

Support for the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act (H.R.
2663 and S. 1407)

Senate

Daines, Steve (R-MT)
Gardner, Cory (R-CO)
Heinrich, Martin (D-NM)
Heller, Dean (R-NV)
Risch, Jim (R-ID)
Tester, Jon (D-MT)
Udall, Tom (D-NM)
Wyden, Ron (D-OR)

House

Amodei, Mark E. (R-NV)
Benishek, Dan (R-MI)
Beyer, Donald (D-VA)
Blum, Rod (R-IA)
Cardenas, Tony (D-CA)
Cartwright, Matthew (D-PA)
Coffman, Mike (R-CO)
Comstock, Barbara (R-VA)
Connolly, Gerald (D-VA)
Cook, Paul (R-CA)
Cooper, Jim (D-TN)
Costa, Jim (D-CA)
Cramer, Kevin (R-ND)
DeFazio, Peter (D-OR)
DeGette, Diana (D-CO)
DelBene, Suzan K. (D-WA)
Denham, Jeff (R-CA)
Duncan, Jeff (R-SC)
Franks, Trent (R-AZ)
Gallego, Ruben (D-AZ)
Gosar, Paul (R-AZ)
Grijalva, Raul
Hardy, Cresent (R-NV)
Hastings, Alcee (D-FL)
Heck, Joseph (R-NV)
Honda, Mike (D-CA)
Huffman, Jared (D-CA)

Kirkpatrick, Ann (D-AZ)
Labrador, Raul R. (R-ID)
LaMalfa, Doug (R-CA)
Lee, Barbara (D-CA)
Loebsack, David (D-IA)
Love, Mia (R-UT)
Lowenthal, Alan (D-CA)
Lujan, Ben Ray (D-NM)
Lujan Grisham, Michelle (D-NM)
McGovern, Jim (D-MA)
McMorris Rodgers, Cathy (R-WA)
McSally, Martha (R-AZ)
Napolitano, Grace (D-CA)
Newhouse, Dan (R-WA)
Pearce, Steve (R-NM)
Perlmutter, Ed (D-CO)
Peters, Scott (D-CA)
Peterson, Collin (D-MN)
Pocan, Mark (D-WI)
Polis, Jared (D-CO)
Rokita, Todd (R-IN)
Ruiz, Raul (D-CA)
Salmon, Matt (R - AZ)
Schrader, Kurt (D-OR)
Schweikert, David (R-AZ)
Simpson, Michael K. (R-ID)
Sinema, Kyrsten (D-AZ)
Stefanik, Elise (R-NY)
Stewart, Chris (R-UT)
Stivers, Steve (R-OH)
Thompson, Mike (D-CA)
Tipton, Scott R. (R-CO)
Titus, Dina (D-NV)
Tsongas, Niki (D-MA)
Valadao, David (R-CA)
Young, Don (R-AK)
Zinke, Ryan (R-MT)

Sportsmen

American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Berkley Conservation Inst.
Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wildlife Federation
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
Pope and Young Club
Public Lands Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited

Counties

National Association of Counties
Arizona County Supervisors Association
Colorado Counties Inc.
Montana Association of Counties
Nevada Association of Counties
New Mexico Association of Counties
Oregon Association of Counties
Utah Association of Counties

Other support

Western Governors' Association
Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development
Outdoor Alliance