



American Bald Eagle/Mick Thompson

Briefing Paper

February 21, 2017

Climate Change is the #1 Threat to Birds

[SUPPORT HB 1555/SB 5127](#) and [HB 1646/SB 5509](#) – Put a Price on Carbon Pollution

[SUPPORT HB 1048](#) – Incentivize Solar Power

What's at Stake?

The Audubon Birds and Climate Change Report¹ states that *nearly half of America's bird species are threatened or endangered by climate change, including 189 species found in the state of Washington.* Carbon pollution from burning fossil fuels is the main contributor to climate change. HB 1555/SB 5127 and HB 1646/SB 5509 would put a price on the sale or use of certain fossil fuels and fossil-fuel generated

¹ Langham GM, Schuetz JG, Distler T, Soykan CU, Wilsey C (2015) Conservation Status of North American Birds in the Face of Future Climate Change. PLoS ONE 10(9): e0135350. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0135350 [journals.plos.org]

electricity, driving down their use and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. HB 1048 would incentivize and promote the use of solar power – a local, renewable energy source – to ensure a clean and independent energy future in Washington.

It's a Bird Issue

Audubon research confirmed that climate change endangers nearly half of North American bird species because their climate ranges—the places with the right set of environmental factors they need—are shrinking and shifting dramatically. Each bird species is finely attuned to a set of environmental factors such as temperature, precipitation, and the change of seasons. As the planet warms, the combination of variables that each species needs is changing—often meaning they have fewer places that meet these requirements. During the past 50 years, more than 60 percent of wintering North American bird species have shifted their winter ranges northward and inland. Soon, they may have nowhere left to go.



Burrowing Owl/ Mick Thompson

Climate change also affects the distribution of plants and other animals that birds need for nesting, protection, and food, and it intensifies existing threats such as extreme weather, drought and fire.

How We Can Safeguard Birds in a Warming World

Protecting birds from climate change is a central pillar of Audubon's mission. Audubon's Birds and Climate Change report showed us we must do two things to protect birds from this threat: 1) Protect the places on the ground that birds need now and in the future so they can be resilient in a warming world, and 2) Mitigate additional warming by reducing carbon emissions and investing in renewable sources of energy. Putting a price on carbon pollution and supporting clean energy solutions such as solar power, will decrease the amount of harmful greenhouse gas emissions in our atmosphere.

What is good for birds is also good for people. The effects of climate change are often borne disproportionately by low-income working families and communities of color. The most important way to avert the worst impacts of climate change is to reduce carbon pollution as quickly as possible. The futures of birds and of people in a warming world are intertwined. Ensuring clean air, water, and habitats that allow birds to thrive means that people can thrive in a healthy environment, too.

To protect birds, bird habitat, and human communities, we support solutions that help reduce the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, slow the pace of climate change, and give birds and people more time to adapt.

"We take every opportunity available to advocate for positive changes in climate policy."

- Executive Director Gail Gatton

**ACTION: Vote YES on HB 1555/SB 5127 and HB 1646/SB 5509
Vote YES on HB 1048**

**Gail Gatton, VP & Executive Director
(206) 652-2444 x101 | ggatton@audubon.org**