

15 March 2006

**Lic. Carlos López Freytes, President**  
**Junta de Calidad Ambiental,**  
**Edificio Nacional Plaza,**  
**431 Ponce de León,**  
**Hato Rey,**  
**Puerto Rico 00910,**  
**USA**

Dear Mr. López,

**Preliminary Declaration of Environmental Impact (DIA-P) for the commercial Wind Energy Farm in Barrio Boca, Guayanilla, Puerto Rico**

A proposal has recently come to the attention of BirdLife International for the construction of a Wind Energy Farm in the globally Important Bird Area (IBA) Punta Ventana, Cerro Toro and Punta Verraco. This IBA has been identified as supporting critical habitat for a globally threatened bird species, the Puerto Rican Nightjar (*Caprimulgus noctitherus*).

BirdLife is a global Partnership of over 100 non-governmental organizations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards the sustainable use of natural resources. Within the IUCN family, BirdLife represents the global scientific authority on birds.

We congratulate the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico for facilitating the development of renewable energy sources, which we believe can help prevent global climate change. BirdLife supports the construction of wind energy farms but we are concerned that this should not be at the expense of globally significant biodiversity. Habitat simplification, fragmentation, degradation and elimination pose the greatest threat to natural ecosystems and biodiversity worldwide. The construction of a wind energy farm will undoubtedly introduce such threat into critical habitat for a globally threatened bird.

The Puerto Rican Nightjar is considered Critically Endangered at the global level by IUCN (2005), and thus is at extremely high risk of becoming extinct in the near future. It is also federally listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.

The nightjar is threatened as is it has an extremely small range within which its habitat is severely fragmented and in continual decline. The population of this bird is approximately 1,400–2,000 individuals. In the 250 ha of the proposed wind energy farm project there are 33 possible territories (representing c.4% of the global population), each of which will likely be impacted either directly or indirectly by the wind energy farm development. The largest population of the Puerto Rican Nightjar (347 birds) survives in the Guánica State Forest (another IBA, and also a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve), which is situated just 50 meters from the boundary of the proposed wind energy farm, and may itself be indirectly impacted by the development.

Wildlife species are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational and scientific value for Puerto Rico and its people. Wildlife, plants, and their ecosystems have value in their own right, as well as value to humans and to the health of the biosphere. Like the Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*) the Puerto Rican Nightjar is an irreplaceable part of your islands' unique biodiversity. This will be a great loss for Puerto Rico, as well as, the wider world.

BirdLife will gladly assist in the resolution of this issue in any way we can. We look forward to hearing from you on such an important matter to the economy and natural resources of Puerto Rico.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Alberto Yanosky  
Chair, Americas Regional Council and Global Council Representative, BirdLife International

CC: Mr. Javier Vélez Arocho, Secretary, PR Department of Natural and Environmental Resources  
Mr. Ángel D. Rodríguez, President, Planning Board  
Mr. Carlos W. López Freytes, President, Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board  
Mr. Carl Soderberg, Director, EPA Regional Office  
Mr. Javier Quintana Méndez, Administrator, Energy Administrator Affairs  
Mr. Edwin Rivera Serrano, Executive Director, Puerto Rico Electrical Power Authority  
Mrs. Susan Silander, Manager, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mr. Miguel A. Rolón, Executive Director, Caribbean Fishery Management Council  
Mr. Miguel Canal, Manager, Guánica State Forest  
Mr. Pedro Alvarado Zayas, Culture Institute of Puerto Rico  
Mr. Edgardo Arlequín, Mayor of Guayanilla  
Mrs. Damaris Delgado, US Corps of Engineers  
Mr. Austre Faiche, Comité Pro Costas Ventana