



## **Trout Unlimited Policy on Climate Change and Promoting Responsible Energy Development to Protect Coldwater Fisheries**

### **Scope and Purpose.**

The mission of Trout Unlimited (TU) is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Central to this mission is the promotion of land and water management that maximizes habitat conservation and minimizes impacts caused by land and water use activities, including the development, construction, operation, and decommissioning of energy projects and facilities. To varying degrees, all energy development has the potential to affect North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. The purpose of this policy statement is to provide guidance for TU's conservation activities as they relate to land and water use associated with energy development, production, transmission and transportation as it affects coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

TU is uniquely qualified to influence the formulation and implementation of an environmentally sound and responsible energy policy at the national, state, and local levels. TU's more than 150,000 members, most of whom are sportsmen, sportswomen and anglers, have detailed knowledge of local and regional conditions, and a long and successful history in planning and carrying out conservation projects. TU also has a highly qualified and capable professional conservation staff. And TU has a proven track record of science-based analysis using respected tools such as the Conservation Success Index (CSI) for evaluating and mitigating impacts on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds throughout North America. In addition TU has completed an ecological footprint analysis that prioritizes areas suitable and unsuitable for future energy development activities.

### **Policy Statement.**

#### **1. Climate Change**

Climate change poses a significant long-term threat to North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, both by increasing water temperatures in critical habitat areas and by contributing to the frequency and severity of adverse weather events. TU recognizes the powerful connections between our Nation's energy choices and climate change.

TU understands that avoiding the severe harmful effects that climate change will have on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds requires both a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from existing energy production as well as a fundamental shift in energy sources from fossil fuels to low-carbon technologies and conservation. Accordingly, TU supports policies and comprehensive systems mechanisms that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hasten the shift to low-carbon energy sources and conservation.

However, the harmful effects of climate change on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds are already present. Because of this, and the deleterious impacts to coldwater fisheries that are expected as a result, TU's primary focus has been and will be to advocate policies and approaches that make communities and landscapes more resilient to the effects of climate change and to do so in a way that benefits wild and native coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

#### **2. Responsible Energy Development**

Because virtually all energy development projects have the potential for at least some impact on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, it is TU's policy to encourage energy development in a way that meets the needs of people while eliminating, minimizing, or mitigating the impacts to coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. TU will work to ensure that energy projects, and related energy transportation projects and facilities in North America are designed, sited, constructed, operated, and decommissioned in a manner that protects coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Collaborative stewardship is TU's preferred approach to achieving the organization's conservation goals. Accordingly, where there is potential for collaboratively developed solutions, consistent with TU's goals, TU will work with all stakeholders, including, federal, state, and local government officials, industry, other conservation and sportsmen's and sportswomen's organizations, the public and other interested parties, to ensure that all reasonable efforts are made to avoid or mitigate the impacts energy development may have on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. TU will work constructively with interested industry leaders and energy project developers to encourage them to identify and implement best practices for the design, siting, construction, operation, and decommissioning of projects to eliminate, minimize or mitigate their impacts on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. In pursuing potential collaboration, TU will fully consider relevant scientific, social, political and economic factors and make informed decisions.

There may be cases in which proposed energy development cannot be reconciled with TU's conservation goals. This could include proposed energy development in areas of critical coldwater fishery habitats, exceptional landscapes or the use of development methods that are unacceptable, owing to the likely primary and secondary deleterious effects of the development on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. In such cases, TU may oppose the proposed development and will use all appropriate means, including litigation and administrative appeals and legislation, to obtain TU's conservation goals.

TU will work to help shape energy development legislation, regulations and policies at the federal, state, and local levels, and to influence the development, siting and operation of individual energy projects and related energy transportation projects, to eliminate, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts on coldwater resources and their watersheds. TU will also advocate for robust and effective regulation of energy resource development and use on both public and private lands at the federal, state, and local levels as appropriate, including the development of adequate regulatory frameworks and adequate resources to support permitting, oversight, and inspection and enforcement of regulatory requirements.

Responsible energy development most often occurs when full information concerning the proposed development is available to the public. TU will work to ensure the availability of adequate information and individual project details to help identify potential adverse impacts on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds and to support effective regulation of energy technologies and projects.

TU will encourage opportunities for effective and meaningful participation by the public and other interested parties in the energy project development, siting, permitting, approval, distribution and decommissioning process. TU will also work to ensure effective enforcement and mitigation measures where needed to correct energy project failures, and violations of regulatory requirements or project specific commitments, and to mitigate and remediate any damage to coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Given the extent of current and planned oil and natural gas energy development projects using hydraulic fracturing technologies and the substantial overlap of these projects and

North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, oil and natural gas development using hydraulic fracturing will continue to be a significant area of focus for TU's conservation programs. TU will work constructively with other interested parties, including government officials, other non-governmental organizations, willing industry participants and citizens, to help achieve goals, such as: adequate control of stormwater runoff caused by well pads and road construction; adequate disclosure of the contents of hydraulic fracturing liquids; efficient use and reuse of hydraulic fracturing liquids so as to reduce the amount of water removed from the hydrologic cycle; appropriate regulation and control of water withdrawals for hydraulic fracturing; effective treatment and disposal of hydraulic fracturing liquids; monitoring of streams to detect pollution from the fracturing process; effective oversight and regulation of the development, permitting, construction, operation, and decommissioning of oil and natural gas energy projects utilizing hydraulic fracturing technologies; and oversight of mining of sand used in the hydraulic fracturing process.

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