



Adopted Sept. 9, 2013

## Support for Great Lakes offshore wind demonstration (pilot) projects

**Whereas**, recognition of the availability of renewable wind energy resources in the Great Lakes is increasing; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes basin is home to 25 million people in the United States, representing approximately 10 percent of the U.S. population; and

**Whereas**, all of the states and provinces bordering the Great Lakes have adopted renewable energy targets; and

**Whereas**, planning is underway for several commercial-scale offshore wind projects in the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States; and

**Whereas**, existing information indicates that accessibility of Great Lakes offshore wind installations can be limited by locks, port facilities, and fresh water that freezes in the winter; but that there will be less wear and tear on offshore wind components in the Great Lakes because fresh water is less corrosive than salt water, and water levels do not change as frequently and considerably as do tidal waters; and

**Whereas**, a 2013 Great Lakes Wind Collaborative study shows that installation of 2,000 megawatts of offshore wind in the Great Lakes by 2030 would provide more than 3,500 full-time construction jobs and another 1,500 operations and maintenance jobs<sup>1</sup>; and

**Whereas**, that same study shows that offshore wind projects are expected to result in steady increases in local and regional economic impact over time due to investments in Great Lakes region-based manufacturing and other important industries needed to support the offshore wind supply chain; and

**Whereas**, while much can be learned from offshore wind projects abroad and from future projects in United States marine environments, freshwater deployment and operation of wind turbines in the Great Lakes presents unique circumstances that require study and evaluation; and

**Whereas**, existing studies and other information are not adequate to answer many questions about economic viability of wind energy, environmental impacts of offshore wind on birds, bats, fish, sediment transport, and other ecological features and functions; and

**Whereas**, in late 2012, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) awarded seven advanced technology demonstration awards for offshore wind in various locations around the United States, one of which went to the Great Lakes region; and

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<sup>1</sup> Loomis, David G. 2013. *Potential Economic Impacts from Offshore Wind in the Great Lakes Region*.

**Whereas**, research being conducted at the Great Lakes offshore wind demonstration project site in Lake Erie complements and builds on related research underway in other Great Lakes states, including the collection of offshore wind, atmospheric, aquatic and avian data by the research buoy *Wind Sentinel* deployed in Lake Michigan, as well as other regional research efforts; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes offshore wind demonstration project in Lake Erie will enable researchers and managers to learn about the environmental as well as economic impacts of offshore wind energy in the Great Lakes; and

**Whereas**, in 2014 the DOE intends to select three projects in which to invest an additional \$46 million each to fund construction and installation of offshore wind facilities for demonstration purposes.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission believes a small-scale demonstration or pilot project is the most direct means of assessing potential environmental impacts, and evaluating economic viability and opportunities for job creation involving offshore wind projects in the Great Lakes.