
Adopted Feb. 23, 2010

Resolution: A Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Offshore Wind* Energy in the Great Lakes

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Energy categorizes Great Lakes offshore wind resources as “outstanding” and “superb”¹ and Great Lakes offshore wind energy has significant potential to address Great Lakes state and provincial renewable energy and energy security goals; and

Whereas, this abundant renewable energy source is currently untapped, but there is growing political and market momentum to develop the offshore wind energy resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf and the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, unlike most land-based wind in the Great Lakes region, Great Lakes offshore winds are located in relative proximity to large urban areas that need the electricity; and

Whereas, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory has estimated that offshore wind has the potential to produce enough energy to meet between 20 percent and 100 percent of the energy needs of at least five of the eight Great Lake states.²

Whereas, the Great Lakes region is well-positioned to take advantage of its offshore wind resources on the Great Lakes and bring that energy to market affordably; and

Whereas, the development of Great Lakes offshore wind resources must be done in a well-planned, sustainable manner; and

Whereas, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) has authority to regulate structures placed in navigable waters of the U.S. under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and placement of dredged or fill material under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the construction and placement of wind turbines in the Great Lakes would be subject to these authorities; and

Whereas, an application to permit the placement of wind turbines in the waters of the Great Lakes will trigger an Environmental Review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), likely in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement; and

Whereas, a *Programmatic* Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) can assess impacts across a span of conditions (facilities, geographic regions or multi-project programs), look at cumulative impacts of the reasonably foreseeable actions under a program, and identify policy-level alternatives, program-level mitigation measures and best management practices; and

¹ U.S. Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/pdfs/wind_maps/us_windmap.pdf

² NREL, Map of *Potential Electricity Supply from Shallow Offshore Wind by State*, Feb. 12, 2007.

* For purposes of this resolution, Great Lakes offshore wind means wind energy that occurs in the waters of the Great Lakes or their connecting channels.

Whereas, a PEIS would benefit the region by identifying up-front issues and impacts that are common and therefore need to be addressed for any offshore wind project on the Great Lakes; providing a mechanism for the Corps to coordinate with other federal agencies on common issues relating to offshore wind projects; and providing an opportunity for states in the region to proactively develop common standards and practices; and

Whereas, a PEIS for offshore wind in the Great Lakes would further benefit the region by reducing time and federal resources spent in reviewing future individual offshore wind development applications because common issues and impacts will already have been identified and assessed, and building efficiency and effectiveness by reducing chances for inconsistencies and delays in future application processing; and

Whereas, the State of Ohio has requested a PEIS for Great Lakes offshore wind in comments to the U.S. Ocean Policy Task Force; and

Whereas, the Council of Great Lakes Governors has formally requested a PEIS for offshore wind development in the Great Lakes and has asked the Council on Environmental Quality to take a leadership role in this endeavor; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative has formally requested that the Corps initiate a PEIS.³

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the Council on Environmental Quality to assume a leadership role in facilitating the development of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement or comparable Great Lakes basinwide comprehensive environmental review under NEPA for offshore wind in the Great Lakes; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the Council on Environmental Quality to initiate a process for federal-state collaboration as part of the aforementioned Great Lakes offshore wind environmental review and that such collaboration engage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Coast Guard; as well as each of the eight Great Lakes states.

³ June 19, 2009. Online at [http://www.glc.org/energy/wind/pdf/Letter to Corps_GL OWW Comp Env Review_FINAL.pdf](http://www.glc.org/energy/wind/pdf/Letter%20to%20Corps_GL_OWW_Comp_Env_Review_FINAL.pdf)