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**STAFF**

Great Lakes Commission

## Future of wind energy in the Great Lakes debated by regional coalition

**For immediate release:** September 26, 2012

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**Erie, Pa.** – Attendees at the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative meeting yesterday got a Keystone State perspective on the progress, opportunities and obstacles for wind energy in the binational Great Lakes region.

Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Michael Krancer provided the keynote address, highlighting Pennsylvania's general economic policy goals before addressing the question looming on the minds of many in the room: is there a continued role for wind energy in light of Pennsylvania's "dash to gas"? Krancer emphasized the importance of collaboration and competition, saying "gas and wind can work in great partnership together."

"I'm a big believer that the state is a laboratory for energy policy," he said. Krancer reminded those present that earlier this year Governor Corbett joined four other Great Lakes states in signing a federal-state Memorandum of Understanding for offshore wind in the Great Lakes, noting "there are probably nice opportunities right here [in Erie] for wind." Secretary Krancer pointed out that changes in state legislation would likely be needed before offshore wind development could take place in Pennsylvania's portion of the Great Lakes. Pennsylvania is not unique in this regard.

In addition to current challenges, the group learned about future opportunities for wind that were part of a recent *Renewable Electricity Futures Report* by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. The report demonstrates how the United States could generate 80 percent of its electricity needs using existing energy technologies by 2050.

Todd Rettig of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources summarized the 11 recommendations included in Illinois's Lake Michigan Offshore Wind Advisory Council report, released in June 2012. Rettig told the group that it's very likely Illinois will see executive action to address some of the recommendations.

(more)

The day concluded with a panel on public engagement and outreach with Ohio and Michigan sharing lessons learned on working with local communities and residents when planning a wind project. Matt Wagner of DTE Energy emphasized the importance of reaching out to the community “early and often,” adding: “People who are not opposed or might like the idea of a wind project often don’t show up to meetings because they are busy with their day-to-day lives. It’s really important to reach out to the community to make sure that everyone’s views are considered – not just those who are most outspoken.”

Describing an outreach and community engagement process he calls the community participation model, Rich Vander Veen of Wind Resource LLC, who was intricately involved in the Gratiot County, Michigan, project told participants: “The opposite of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) is ownership. Public participation and community engagement is not optional.”

Steve Dever of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, who has led the public outreach efforts for the proposed offshore wind project near Cleveland said: “In order to have the public’s trust and confidence, you need to encourage the public’s scrutiny of your project.” When asked about the costs of extensive community outreach, Vander Veen said, “Not making the community part of the project is not an option.”

The Great Lakes Wind Collaborative wraps up their 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting today with sessions on the Great Lakes region’s wind energy supply chain, including results of a new study showing the job and economic development impacts of offshore wind in the Great Lakes.

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*Managed by the Great Lakes Commission, the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative is a multi-sector coalition of wind energy stakeholders working to facilitate the sustainable development of wind power in the binational Great Lakes region. Learn more at [www.glc.org/energy/wind](http://www.glc.org/energy/wind).*