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Obama Administration Hosts Great Lakes Offshore Wind Workshop in Chicago with Great Lakes Wind Collaborative

WASHINGTON – The White House Council on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Department of Energy hosted a workshop with the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative in Chicago on October 26 – 27, 2010, focused on the siting of offshore wind power in the Great Lakes. The two day workshop brought together wind developers, Federal and state regulators, environmental advocates, and other regional stakeholders to discuss methods for ensuring greater clarity, certainty and coordination of Federal and state decision-making for offshore wind development in the Great Lakes.

“President Obama has made an unprecedented commitment to renewable energy development in the United States. Increasing our wind power generation is a critical component to building greater energy independence and creating jobs here at home,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. “We must improve and increase the lines of communication to bring wind development in the Great Lakes closer to fruition.”

“The country’s vast offshore wind resources have the potential to dramatically reduce America’s dependence on fossil fuels, make us more economically competitive, and support new manufacturing jobs in the U.S.,” said U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu. “By working collaboratively with private industry and our state and Federal partners, we can help to accelerate and support the development of wind energy in the Great Lakes.”

More than 100 people participated in the workshop, including representatives from Federal agencies, state governments, energy companies, state Public Service Commissions, wind developers and manufacturers, non-profit organizations and other industry experts. The workshop offered participants an opportunity to:

- learn more about the role of various federal agencies in the siting of offshore wind power in the Great Lakes; and
- clarify the process by which developers, states and other stakeholders can engage federal and state regulators in offshore wind development in the Great Lakes

The workshop concluded with these stakeholders charting a path forward to develop a collaborative process to achieve greater clarity and certainty during federal decision making with regard to offshore wind development in the Great Lakes.

“As a result of this workshop, we now have a clear understanding of the barriers and opportunities for wind development in the Great Lakes. We now have a path for moving forward that brings clarity and certainty to the process and that will benefit states, developers and the public,” said Terry Yonker, co-chair of the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative.

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. For more information on the Collaborative, visit www.glc.org/energy/wind.

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