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Obama Administration and Great Lakes States Announce Agreement to Spur Development of Offshore Wind Projects

Multi-state, multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding enhances coordination and speeds review of potential projects

Washington, D.C. – As part of President Obama’s blueprint for an economy built to last, the Obama Administration today joined with the governors of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York and Pennsylvania to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will focus the efforts of key federal and state regulatory agencies to promote the efficient and responsible development of offshore wind resources in the Great Lakes. This effort underscores the President’s commitment to American energy sources that will increase economic competitiveness, boost our energy independence, and create jobs.

“President Obama is taking an all-of-the-above approach to energy, including doubling down on developing clean sources like wind,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. “This agreement among Federal agencies and Great Lakes states is a smart, practical way to encourage the development of homegrown energy that will create jobs, power homes, and reduce pollution in American communities.”

“As the President has made clear, an American economy that lasts is one built on American energy, designed and produced by American workers,” said Deputy Energy Secretary Daniel Poneman. “This effort will allow us to tap into our abundant offshore resources, enhancing our energy security through an all-of-the-above strategy that develops every available source of American energy.”

The MOU will enhance collaboration between Federal and State agencies to speed review of proposed offshore wind projects. Specifically, Federal and State agencies will develop an action plan that sets priorities and recommends steps for achieving efficient and responsible evaluation of proposed offshore wind power projects in the Great Lakes region.

Unlocking the Great Lakes’ offshore wind energy resources could yield tremendous economic and environmental benefits throughout the region, and has the potential to produce more than 700 gigawatts of energy from offshore wind, about one fifth of the total offshore wind potential in the U.S. The development of even a small portion of the area’s offshore wind potential could create tens of thousands of clean energy jobs and generate revenue for local businesses.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that each gigawatt of offshore wind installed could produce enough electricity to power 300,000 homes, avoid 1.7 million tons of coal-fired energy annually and eliminate 2.7 million metric tons

of carbon emissions. The efforts made possible by today's agreement will also bolster existing investments in offshore wind technologies by promoting a consistent and predictable regulatory environment that inspires innovation and helps to bring clean energy solutions to market.

"In Illinois, we believe investing in clean energy projects and the development of wind resources helps promote economic development and create jobs, while reducing our dependence on foreign energy sources," Illinois Governor Pat Quinn said. "We are extremely pleased to collaborate with the U.S. DOE and our fellow Great Lakes states to harness the clean, natural power of our offshore wind."

"Minnesota has been a leader in developing wind energy for nearly two decades. We now have more than 2.7 thousand megawatts of wind projects online, and we rank fifth among the states for the most installed wind capacity," said Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton. "We look forward to sharing our expertise with other states and federal agencies, to learning from them, and to collaborating on the further development of offshore wind resources."

"The Great Lakes have the potential to provide clean energy from offshore wind and related green jobs in upstate New York," said New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. "This MOU offers a responsible mechanism for enhanced and efficient collaboration among federal, state and local interests in evaluating processes and proposals for development of this resource."

"This agreement will enable states to work together to ensure that any proposed off-shore wind projects are reviewed in a consistent manner, and that the various state and federal agencies involved collaborate and coordinate their reviews," said Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett.

To safely and responsibly develop offshore wind resources, Federal and State agencies – which share jurisdiction in the Great Lakes – must fully evaluate the potential social, environmental, safety and security impacts of projects. The agreement signed today will enhance collaboration between Federal and State agencies to speed review of proposed offshore wind projects and accelerate the development of clean, American energy from offshore wind energy resources in the Great Lakes region. Under the MOU, Federal and State agencies will develop an action plan that sets priorities and recommends steps for achieving efficient and responsible evaluation of proposed offshore wind power projects in the Great Lakes region.

The following participants have signed the MOU:

State of Illinois
State of Michigan
State of Minnesota
State of New York
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
White House Council on Environmental Quality
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of the Army
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Aviation Administration
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

A fact sheet can be found [HERE](#), and the MOU can be read in full [HERE](#)