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20 Leading Environmental, Conservation & Wind Energy Groups Launch New Institute

“American Wind Wildlife Institute” Will Set New Cooperative Action on U.S. Wind Energy Development

AUSTIN, TX – In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, 20 of the nation’s top science-based conservation and environmental groups and wind energy companies have created a national institute to facilitate timely and responsible development of wind energy while protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. The institute will do this through research, mapping, mitigation and public education on best practices in wind farm siting and habitat protection.

The American Wind Wildlife Institute (AWWI) will begin with an operating budget of \$3 million for its first two years. To carry out its mission, AWWI will focus on conducting research, promoting sustainable development, funding biodiversity protection, and educating the public about the interplay between wildlife and wind turbines.

“Climate and energy are *the* issues of our time,” said Julia Levin, Global Warming Director at the National Audubon Society and the first chair of AWWI’s board of directors. “AWWI will play a crucial role in developing the science, mapping and other tools needed to accelerate properly sited wind power development and begin reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.”

Scientific, conservation and wind industry leaders believe that wind energy must play an important role in combating climate change. Understanding that wind power is already one of the cleanest and most commercially viable energy sources, AWWI will help the industry serve as an example for other energy sectors by proactively addressing potential biodiversity impacts as wind energy is more widely deployed.

“Addressing global climate change demands a higher level of collaboration between different sectors and interests,” said Jan Blittersdorf, CEO of NRG Systems and AWWI vice chair. “Development of clean, renewable wind energy and wildlife protection need not be mutually exclusive goals. It’s my pleasure to work with industry and non-profit leaders to make this vision a reality.”

The seven non-profit founding organizations of AWWI, which have members in all 50 states, represent more than 4.3 million members nationwide. These founding groups

include: Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and Union of Concerned Scientists.

“The expansion of wind power in the United States is essential to reduce heat-trapping emissions and limit the impacts of global warming on our nation’s wildlife,” said Dr. Peter Frumhoff, AWWI board member and Director of Science and Policy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. “Our new institute will work to ensure that wind power and wildlife can both thrive.”

The remaining 13 founding AWWI members are wind industry businesses. These founding members include many of the leading companies involved in supplying wind turbines, developing and constructing renewable energy projects and providing support services to this domestic energy industry which will have generated more than \$18 billion in revenues in 2008. They include: AES Wind Energy, BP Wind Energy, Babcock & Brown, enXco, Clipper Windpower, E.ON, GE Energy, Horizon Wind Energy, Iberdrola Renewable Energies USA, Nordic Windpower, NRG Systems, Renewable Energy Systems Americas and Vestas Americas.

“BP believes the Department of Energy’s study of delivering 20 percent of U.S. electricity by 2030 from clean, renewable wind power is technically feasible, economically sensible and an environmental imperative,” said Robert Lukefahr, President, BP Wind Energy. “The collaborative partnership behind the launch of AWWI demonstrates the commitment to developing best practices for the wind industry that minimize the impacts on wildlife and its natural habitat,” he added.

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