

GOVERNOR PATRICK SETS NEW GOALS FOR WIND POWER

Developing wind turbines to power 800,000 homes by 2020 will boost Massachusetts as clean energy leader

BOSTON- Tuesday, January 13, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick today set a goal of developing 2,000 megawatts of wind power capacity - enough to power 800,000 Massachusetts homes - by 2020. Citing new mandates that require greater use of renewable energy and sharp reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, Massachusetts can only fulfill these obligations with a significant commitment to wind power.

"We have already made a commitment to reaching 250 megawatts of solar power in Massachusetts by 2017, and we are moving toward that goal. Now is the time to turn to wind power, where we should reach even higher," said Governor Patrick. "With the growing interest in wind turbines we see in communities across the Commonwealth and the abundant wind resource we have off our coast, wind power is going to be a centerpiece of the clean energy economy we are creating for Massachusetts."

Massachusetts has been selected by the U.S. Department of Energy for one of just two Wind Technology Testing Centers in the country, poising the Commonwealth to become a national center for wind power research and development, offering the economic rewards of technology development, entrepreneurship, and jobs.

In April 2007, Governor Patrick established a goal for installed solar power of 250 MW by 2017, up from 4 MW installed at the time he took office. That goal was set in part as a pledge to Evergreen Solar, which was then announcing its first US manufacturing facility now built and opened in Devens, to stimulate the market for solar panels in Massachusetts. In January 2008, Governor Patrick launched Commonwealth Solar, a program financed by existing renewable energy funds, which has since provided rebates for more than 400 installations representing 4.6 MW of solar power - nearly doubling the amount of installed solar power in a year - with another 300 projects for 3.5 MW applied for but not yet awarded as of December 31. The number of solar-power installation companies has also tripled, from 25 to 75, since the launch of Commonwealth Solar.

Governor Patrick has directed Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles to use the 2,000 MW wind goal, as well as the mandates and incentives provided in the historic package of clean energy legislation enacted last year, to guide the state's efforts to dramatically increase the development and deployment of clean, renewable wind power in the coming years.

There are currently nine wind turbines with capacity of 100 kilowatts or greater installed in Massachusetts, for total generating capacity of 6.6 megawatts (MW). But there are more than 300 wind turbines, representing generating capacity of 800 MW, at various stages of planning and permitting.

Legislation enacted last year contained provisions requiring greater use of renewable energy and encouraging its development and adoption. The Green Communities Act, a comprehensive energy reform

bill, accelerated the increase of renewable energy required of all electricity suppliers, rising from 4 percent of sales to 15 percent by 2020, and set a goal of 20 percent of all electricity coming from renewables by that time.

To spur the development and adoption of renewable energy, the Green Communities Act required utilities to enter into long-term contracts with the developers of renewable energy projects, in order to help them obtain financing, and improved the economics of smaller renewable energy installations by allowing owners to sell their excess power into the electric grid at favorable rates.

"The Green Communities Act smoothed the way for wind turbines with new incentives, and municipalities around the Commonwealth are lining up to bring wind power to their communities," said Secretary Bowles. "We are going to do everything we can to help them, and create a vibrant wind power industry at the same time."

Recognizing that siting is frequently an obstacle to renewable energy development, the Green Communities Act created an energy facilities siting commission to review, in part, "whether current laws and regulations do not adequately facilitate the siting of renewable and alternative energy facilities" to propose changes. That commission is now meeting, and is expected to make recommendations this spring.

Under the Oceans Act, the comprehensive ocean management plan now under development and required to be completed by the end of 2009 is expected to identify locations in state waters other than the Cape Cod Ocean Sanctuary, off the coast of the national seashore, for potential development of "appropriate-scale renewable energy facilities." And a study of the potential for renewable power development on state-owned lands mandated by the Green Jobs Act is due February 1.

In addition, the climate bill enacted last year, the Global Warming Solutions Act, requires the Commonwealth to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases 80 percent by 2050, and up to 25 percent by 2020.

Installing wind capacity of 2,000 MW would meet an estimated 10 percent of the state's current electric load with clean, renewable wind power. And by displacing electricity generated by fossil fuels, use of wind turbines on this scale would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3.1 million tons, or roughly 12 percent of emissions from power plants today.

"First Wind applauds Governor Patrick's efforts to make wind energy a priority in Massachusetts," said Paul Gaynor, President and CEO of First Wind. "First Wind is proud to be a Massachusetts company in large part due to leadership that the Governor, Secretary Bowles, and the Legislature have shown in making the Commonwealth a nurturing environment for the development of alternative energies, notably wind power."