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Wind industry calls for long-term public policy commitments

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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Leading wind energy company and trade association officials meeting in Washington, DC for the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) announced Thursday that “a firm, long-term national renewable energy policy is key to attracting investment and is good economic, trade, energy security and carbon avoidance policy.”

At a time of continuing economic turmoil in the U.S. and around the world, the wind industry estimates that by 2020, over 2 million people could be employed in the wind energy industry. GWEC figures show that the wind energy industry generated over \$47 billion in annual capital investment in 2008 and supports more than 400,000 jobs globally. As well, “With 260 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity produced by 120 gigawatts of installed capacity, wind energy avoided around 160 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in 2008, and this figure is projected to reach 1.5 billion tons annually by 2020, equivalent to taking 28 million cars off the road.”

But the wind industry warns that for wind to achieve its full economic and environmental potential, “it is crucial to introduce firm and long-term national renewable energy policies.” GWEC leaders points to Europe as proof that policy certainty is key in creating investor confidence, noting that “Of the world’s large strategic markets – Europe, China, and the U.S. – the U.S. is the only one without a firm, long-term renewable energy commitment in place.” Over 70 countries have deployed wind energy, created new permanent jobs and avoided carbon as a result of renewable energy requirements. Most of these countries have introduced renewable energy policies based on national renewable energy requirements, pricing, “must-take” or other mechanisms. For the U.S., a strong renewable electricity standard is the GWEC policy of choice to provide the firm commitment needed to draw both project development and manufacturing.

The wind industry says its global and local companies, manufacturers, wind project developers and the many other companies in the industry are creating good jobs and new business opportunities while reducing emissions. To do even more, according to GWEC members, the wind industry “needs from governments the firm, long-term renewable energy commitments that will stimulate and attract further investment.”

For more information, visit the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) at:
<http://www.awea.org/>

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