



## **White House promises expanding commitment to renewable energy**

**By Jon H. Harsch**

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Washington, Dec. 15 – White House Energy & Climate Change Policy Director Carol Browner announced in a briefing Monday that on top of the Recovery Act’s “single largest investment in clean energy in history,” more money is on the way. She said new money coming in January will include “up to \$2.3 billion for advanced energy manufacturing facilities which will leverage up to \$5.4 billion in private-sector funding, putting us on track to nearly double our capacity to manufacture clean energy components by 2012.”

The additional \$7.7 billion means that more of the rapidly expanding network of wind farms, solar arrays, biorefineries and electric vehicles will be built with U.S. parts and labor – not with Chinese imports. She added specifically that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Energy Secretary Steven Chu “announced more than \$600 million in investments for 19 advanced biorefinery projects, projects in 15 states that will help lay the foundation for the full commercial-scale development of the biomass industry in the United States.”

Browner was speaking in advance of Tuesday’s release of Vice President Biden’s “Progress Report” to President Obama on “The Transformation to a Clean Energy Economy.” The report notes that “The Recovery Act investments of \$80 billion for clean energy will produce as much as \$150 billion in clean energy projects.” It adds that other federal programs “could produce up to \$90 billion in additional clean energy projects.” This \$240 billion in total investments is “designed to accelerate investment in clean energy projects and pull private investment off the sidelines. . . jumpstarting a major transformation of our energy system including unprecedented growth in the generation of renewable sources of energy, enhanced manufacturing capacity for clean energy technology, advanced vehicle and fuel technologies, and a bigger, better, smarter electric grid.”

Jared Bernstein, Vice President Biden’s Chief Economic Adviser, said the federal investments overall are designed “to lay the groundwork, the foundation for some of the President’s top priorities.” He said “one of the highest priorities of this administration is to promote the production and use of renewable energy” to achieve energy independence,

attack climate change, and create “good, lasting private-sector jobs in new domestic industries in the new economy.”

Bernstein said to achieve these clean energy goals, because of “large fixed costs and uncertainty around the returns available from new markets, there is a role for the federal government to play in planting the seeds with public investments.” He stressed that “These seeds will be raised to fruition by private capital currently waiting on the sidelines, private innovation and entrepreneurship.” He said that the lasting effect of the credit crisis “continues to block [private-sector] investments that would likely be made under more normal economic and credit conditions.”

Bernstein called sustained government investment “critical to stimulating an economic expansion characterized by growth that’s both cleaner and more broadly shared than today, growth based on meaningful investments in our future, not on financial speculation and bubbles.” He said this approach is designed to “stimulate the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the near term, putting folks to work in green jobs.”

Questioned whether congressional insistence on more money for nuclear power, offshore drilling and carbon capture for coal plants might reduce support for renewables, Browner said that “We don’t believe that one comes at the expense of the other.”

To read Vice President Biden’s complete Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> seven-page Memorandum for the President, from the Vice President, “Progress Report: The Transformation to a Clean Energy Economy,” go to [www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091214H3.pdf](http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091214H3.pdf).

Renewable Energy	Where we were on January 1, 2009	Where we are headed by 2012
Gigawatts of renewable energy	27.8 GW	Meet or exceed 55.6 GW
Renewable Manufacturing Capacity	6 GW	Meet or exceed 12 GW

Chart: from Vice President Biden’s “Progress Report” to President Obama

**Renewable energy . . . it’s all about jobs says the Vice President’s report:**

- “By the end of next year we will have made commitments to support more than 15 GW of new wind, solar and geothermal and other renewable energy – enough renewable energy to power 4 to 5 million homes per year. According to New Energy Finance, there are more and greater private investments in wind than would have been possible without Recovery Act funding.”
- “At the same time, we are increasing our capacity to make the wind turbines, solar panels and other renewable energy components here in America. Recovery Act investments of up to \$2.3 billion for advanced energy manufacturing facilities will likely generate 17,000 jobs. This investment will be matched by as much as \$5.4 billion in private-sector funding likely supporting up to 41,000 additional jobs and up to two hundred advanced energy manufacturing projects, including solar, wind, and biomass.”

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