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Governor Doyle Announces Regional Initiative Focused on Wind Energy Support

Upper Midwest Transmission Development Initiative Plans to Address Pressing Need for Regional Cooperation on Electric Grid Expansion to Support Wind Energy Resources

MADISON - Today Governor Jim Doyle and four other Midwest Governors announced the creation of a regional transmission planning effort that will promote regional electric transmission investment and cost sharing. The Upper Midwest Transmission Development Initiative will identify wind generation resources, transmission projects and infrastructure needed to support those resources in a cost-effective manner. Over the next 12 months, participants will determine a reasonable allocation for the costs of the region and will lead to the development of a concrete plan or tariff proposal for the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator (MISO).

Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota will join Wisconsin to coordinate efforts among state regulatory agencies, transmission companies, utilities, independent generation owners and other key stakeholders in the initiative. These states will work closely with MISO which is presently conducting a variety of transmission planning studies with results expected in 2009.

"Coordinated transmission planning centered on renewable energy is critical to providing a diverse supply of affordable, clean energy to our region," Governor Jim Doyle said. "The coordinated transmission planning we are announcing today matches the recommendations made in a report by Wisconsin's Global Warming Task Force."

Governors from the other four participating states also expressed optimism for this joint effort:

"The time is right for planning and coordination between these states in the Midwest ISO," Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty said. "As states in the region increase their use of wind energy, planning on how best to locate wind farms and other renewable sources and build the necessary transmission infrastructure to support them is crucial."

"This effort complements and meshes very well with ongoing initiatives at MISO and the Midwest Governors Association," said South Dakota Governor Michael Rounds, who is also the current MGA Chair.

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"I'm committed to Iowa's continued production of renewable energy," Iowa Governor Chet Culver said. "This collaboration on electric transmission development continues and strengthens our goal of making Iowa the renewable energy capital of the United States. A critical issue is cost sharing, and I am confident that this group of like-minded states can work through that difficult issue."

"The positive economic implications of sound energy planning are already apparent in North Dakota," North Dakota Governor John Hoeven said. "Regional cooperation and preplanning by North Dakota and the four other states involved in this initiative will help to attract new transmission investments that are timely and well-designed to expedite wind energy development in our state and our region."

Participants of the initiative will hold their first meeting in October. Afterward, a project timeline, scope statement, work plan, and identification of appropriate stakeholders will be available.