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American Wind Energy Association « Governor O'Malley's Blog

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American Wind Energy Association

October 11th, 2011

Baltimore, MD

Thank you all very much,... To Denise Bode, Jim Lanard, Aileen Kenney, and everyone with the American Wind Energy Association, thank you for your leadership on these issues which are so important to our country, and our ability to create jobs in this changing new economy.



Secretary Salazar, welcome to Maryland,... and thank you for all that you are doing at the Department of Interior. Fast tracking the permitting process for off-shore wind is a big deal to us in Maryland. We are the second state to get a Request of Information out, so we can move forward on off-shore wind.

It's great to join so many colleagues from the Maryland General Assembly – Senator Roger Manno, Delegate Mary Washington, Delegate Keith Haynes, Delegate Adrienne Jones, and Delegate John Cardin

It's great to have the opportunity to join you here. Welcome to the Greatest City in America!

Just how welcome is the wind industry here in Maryland? You may have heard that the Maryland Offshore Wind Coalition released a survey which found that 62% of Marylanders are willing to pay a little more on their energy bill for some of their electric to be powered by wind. And just this morning, the Atlantic Wind Coalition released a survey which found that 68% of Marylanders, “want elected officials to support offshore wind, even if it is initially more expensive.”

In our State, we take great pride in setting an example for other states to rally around. Some of you may be familiar with Maryland's nickname in history: the Old Line State. It comes from 1776, the Maryland 400 volunteers. When Washington's army was close to annihilation, these 400 Marylanders stepped into the breach. These volunteers, some of them immigrants, some of them free

black citizens in a still imperfect country, fought under a flag that had 13 stars and 13 stripes. The stars were arranged in a circle, and there was one star in the center, and that star was Maryland – the middle State, that State around which other states rallied.

This is a tradition we take very seriously in our State. One area we want to set an example for the rest of the country is wind. That's what I want to talk with you about today.

JOBS

Why is wind a priority in Maryland? Why should we care? In a word, the answer is jobs.

Of all the challenges we face as a country, and of all the tough decisions we have to make together as a people, our top priority must be jobs. That's how we grow our economy. That's how we strengthen and grow the ranks of an increasingly diverse and upwardly mobile middle class. That's how we expand opportunity to more people rather than fewer. And that's how we make our children winners in this changing new economy.

It's one of the great ironies of these times, that the very immensity of the global challenges we face in regards to things like climate change, are driving job creating innovation in states like Maryland. It's all connected.

I don't need to remind anyone in this room, that wind energy means jobs. Part of the magic of wind turbines is that your companies tend to build the turbines close to where you install them.

So in Maryland, for example, if we're able to move forward on off-shore wind off of Ocean City, we'll be able to create as many as 2,000 manufacturing, construction, and assembly jobs each year, on top of the 400 permanent jobs we'd create upon completion. And that helps produce an economic impact of \$1.9 billion.

Our global competitors get this. In China they are creating 100,000 clean energy industry jobs every year. And as you are no doubt aware, China now builds 50% of all the world's wind turbines and solar panels.

And yet, our country rates #1 in the world in innovation, while China ranks 26th. Our universities are the envy of the world. We have the coastline conducive to offshore wind and we are home to the most innovative and creative people on earth.

We are, what Marylander Thomas Friedman calls "a high imagination enabling economy."

As Americans, we have the wherewithal to create more clean energy jobs and secure a greater market share than our global competitors, if we are able to find the will.

In Maryland, we have the will. I want to update you on our efforts.

ADVANCING WIND ENERGY IN MARYLAND

Maryland's economy is increasingly an Innovation Economy – and clean-tech, and green-tech are a big part of that:

- We have set some of America's most aggressive goals for decreasing energy consumption in our State;

- We've raised our Renewable Portfolio Standard to 20% by 2022.
- We led the charge for RGGI, the nation's first cap-and-trade auction of greenhouse gas,...
- We've set an aggressive goal for decreasing our state's carbon footprint; and
- We've been succeeding at creating green jobs at places like GM's plant in Baltimore County, where we're going to create more than 800 jobs because we convinced GM to build their next generation electric motor in Maryland, rather than Mexico.

Today, we have on-shore wind turbines spinning in Western Maryland, and we are very much committed to making off-shore a reality off the coast of Ocean City.

As you know, it's been projected that there are enough wind resources off the Eastern Seaboard to generate more power than the region uses.

Our greatest challenges are not primarily financial nor are they technological. They are political.

None of us can sugarcoat the political challenges we face. Our Administration proposed legislation in Maryland's General Assembly to promote offshore wind, which came up short in our most recent legislative session.

Nationally, the 1705 loan guarantee program has now ended, the investment tax credit is in danger of expiring, and one party in Congress – which relies heavily on campaign contributions from the oil and gas industries – continues to insist on standing in the way of job-creating progress on cleaner, greener energy.

So the political obstacles we face are significant. But there are things we can do together.

In Maryland, one of the things we're doing – along with our neighbors in Delaware – is reaching out to the federal government. We are proposing to team with our federal partners, who have 58 facilities in Maryland, on power purchase agreements for off-shore wind energy.

There's a successful model for this in Maryland. Through an initiative called Clean Horizons, we've entered into three power purchase agreements for clean energy in tandem with our state university system. Thus far, we are projecting that through Clean Horizons, we'll bring enough clean power onto our grid to support 20,000 homes or 16% of our state government's energy load.

But here's the best part: by entering these agreements, we've been able to create 250 construction jobs, and leverage more than \$320 million in private investment.

CHOOSING MARYLAND

There's another partnership we want to form, and that's the partnership with all of you. Forbes Magazine says we're one of America's 14 best states for business. And simply put, we want your business.

Why choose Maryland? Because no other state in America has the same combination of location, workforce, and world-class facilities:

- Maryland is home to America's #1 best public school system, so says Education Week magazine for three years in a row. We therefore have one of our country's most highly skilled workforces;
- We also have an excellent transportation infrastructure, which includes easy access to three major airports and the world class Port of Baltimore;
- We are recognized by the Milken Institute as being one of the Top 2 States for Science and Technology. The Kauffman Index puts us in the Top 3 for our ability to win in the New Economy. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce says we're a Top 5 State for growth. And Moody's, Fitch, and Standard and Poor's have all affirmed our Triple A Bond Rating,... only 8 states can say that.

CONCLUSION

As I close, let me offer a challenge to everyone here: Governments, industry, buyers of electricity- let's work together to create a market on a large scale. And to those of you from industry, I challenge you to answer with a decreased price.

The issues at hand are more Lewis and Clarke than third grade reading, more the voyage of the Mayflower, than multiplication tables. There is no recipe. This is discovery. And in any great discovery — whether by an individual or a people — there is a mixture of will, of action, in the sparking of the Divine on the flint of the human spirit.

Thank you for everything that you are doing to advance wind energy. We hope to have the opportunity to work with you in Maryland.

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