

**DOI Onshore Renewable Energy Conference
February 9–10, 2011
Questions by Subject, Secretaries Roundtable Discussion**

PROMOTING AND EXPANDING RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

- Secretary Chu, in explaining how we get to 80% you say we will drive development via a national RPS. Wouldn't it be smarter and faster to craft a national feed-in tariff for wind, solar, and geothermal? This, if done right, promotes far more certainty and works faster than RPS.—Barbara Boyle, Sierra Club
- The production tax-credit has been a subtle, but important issue for wind energy development as it creates a time-line for development that very often conflicts with implementing monitoring and research to address wildlife conflicts. This will certainly generate potential conflicts for the newly released wind guidelines by the USFWS. Has this been considered and might we consider changes to tax-credit legislation?—Dr. Ed Arnett, Bat Conservation International
- Secretary Chu, are there any plans to expand the new SunShot program to solar thermal? It currently only applies to utility-scale PV.—Shannon Eddy, Large-Scale Solar Association
- Secretary Chu, how confident are you that no more money will be taken from the loan guarantee program?—Ed Rothschild, Podesta Group
- Secretary Chu, it is obvious DOE is committed to R&D of renewable energy. What is DOE doing to support the deployment of RE, beyond the tax incentives?—Anonymous
- As the federal agencies are working to improve efficiencies in the development process for renewables, can you discuss the work you can do for hydropower development in particular? At DOI, the Bureau of Reclamation has additional power opportunities and FWS and the USFS are closely insulated in the licensing process with FERC. DOE is also working on several activities to promote development—Jeffrey Leahey, National Hydropower Association
- How can the administration ensure that private lands are included in planning for renewable energy with public lands? What improvements and streamlining can be done for wildlife reviews on private lands?—V. John White, CEERT
- Secretary Salazar, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 established the Energy Pilot offices. These offices have helped streamline the energy permitting process. The BLM has established the

“RECO” offices to help with renewable permitting. Has there been any thought on expanding the “RECO” program to include USFWS, especially given the implementation of the new Eagle and Wind Guidelines?—Scott Covington, USFWS

- Can you comment on plans or positions regarding the development of forest bioenergy (not biofuels) on public or private lands? Any plans for pilot projects or other federal support for R&D?—Deb Callahan, Heinz Center for Science, Economics, and the Environment
- What “carrots” can you offer to staffs in the field to engage effectively?—John Reben, NPS Intermountain Region
- Renewable energy interests span those of industry, several federal agencies, as well as states and environmental organizations. What is being done to promote and facilitate effective communications among these parties inside the beltway?—Anonymous
- Secretary Salazar, you have had a lot of success in California and Nevada on renewable energy. How do we expand that success to other states?—Anonymous

TRANSMISSION

- A key element of bringing new utility-scale renewables online is transmission. How do we get it built?—Anonymous
- One type of landscape that has great potential for siting wind turbines is agricultural (due to the very small actual footprint of turbines and the ability of farms to grow among turbines). What interagency action has been taken to encourage installation of wind farms on farm land? Also, wind can produce baseload power when spread across large distances, but requires extensive transmission. The patchwork of electricity and regulators, i.e. RTOs, makes this particularly hard. What is being done on this front?—Michael Craig, Oceana
- As millions of acres of CRP lands are retired, please comment on the challenges and opportunities presented by this to rural America, renewable energy, and the need for transmission.—Jason Thomas, Clean Line Energy
- Secretary Chu, in accordance with section 1222 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, DOE released an RFP in 2010 to partner with transmission developers to expand transmission for renewable energy. Our proposal will allow for the expansion of 7,000 megawatts of wind and renewable energy in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. Why has DOE not acted on any of the section 1222 proposals submitted?—Jason Thomas, Clean Line Energy Partners

- How can state, federal, local, and tribal governments and industry better communicate the necessity for transmission to link us to our renewable energy future? Transmission is an essential infrastructure to eliminate “silos” of standard green assets.—Julia Souder, Clean Line Energy Partners
- The US Grid currently has minimal capacity to take renewables. What is the strategy to change that, fund it, and how long will it take?—Elaine Suriano, EPA

LEASING, PERMITTING, SITING, AND NEPA COMPLIANCE

- How can the federal family, including CEQ and DoD, improve coordination on permitting and siting of renewable energy facilities?—Chase Huntley, The Wilderness Society
- A leasing approach is working well on the OCS. You have the authority to adopt a leasing approach to on-shore—why don’t you?—Bob Barnes, The Nature Conservancy
- One type of landscape that has great potential for siting wind turbines is agricultural (due to the very small actual footprint of turbines and the ability of farms to grow among turbines). What interagency action has been taken to encourage installation of wind farms on farm land? Also, wind can produce baseload power when spread across large distances, but requires extensive transmission. The patchwork of electricity and regulators, i.e. RTOs, makes this particularly hard. What is being done on this front?—Michael Craig, Oceana
- CEQ recently released new guidance on monitoring and mitigation in NEPA processes. What are your plans to modify your current NEPA regulations to implement the new guidance, especially for energy development?—Bob Barnes, The Nature Conservancy
- As millions of acres of CRP lands are retired, please comment on the challenges and opportunities presented by this to rural America, renewable energy, and the need for transmission.—Jason Thomas, Clean Line Energy
- On solar PEIS—if priority is “Smart from the Start,” why does the preferred alternative allow projects to be built outside the renewable energy zones?—Anonymous

WIND GUIDELINES

- The production tax-credit has been a subtle, but important issue for wind energy development as it creates a time-line for development that very often conflicts with implementing

monitoring and research to address wildlife conflicts. This will certainly generate potential conflicts for the newly released wind guidelines by the USFWS. Has this been considered and might we consider changes to tax-credit legislation?—Dr. Ed Arnett, Bat Conservation International

- How will DOI ensure that the wind guidelines are followed and at what point will DOI use its authority to regulate under the MBTA if the wind guidelines do not result in significant reductions in bird mortality at wind farms?—Kelly Fuller, American Bird Conservation
- Secretary Salazar, the wind turbine guidelines that were developed over 2.5 years by the FAC represented an historical and deliberate consensus among conservation groups, industry, and agencies. *Why* is the USFWS revising these consensus-based guidelines without consulting the parties that drafted them? How will the FWS ensure proposed changes to the guidelines are practical and feasible? How will concerns from industries and NGOs be incorporated and addressed?—Chris Taylor, Element Power
- Secretary Salazar, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 established the Energy Pilot offices. These offices have helped streamline the energy permitting process. The BLM has established the “RECO” offices to help with renewable permitting. Has there been any thought on expanding the “RECO” program to includes USFWS, especially given the implementation of the new Eagle and Wind Guidelines?—Scott Covington, USFWS

BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE, MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

- Virtually every wind energy facility will at some point injure or kill at least one migratory bird, and the operator will therefore commit a violation of the MBTA. Yesterday you released the voluntary guidelines for wind energy development. Will you use an operator’s conformity with these guidelines to inform your prosecutorial discretion for violations of the MBTA?—Bob Barnes, The Nature Conservancy
- How will DOI ensure that the wind guidelines are followed and at what point will DOI use its authority to regulate under the MBTA if the wind guidelines do not result in significant reductions in bird mortality at wind farms?—Kelly Fuller, American Bird Conservation
- Secretary Salazar, how will you know if the eagle permit system is successful? If the eagle take permit system is successful, will DOI use its MBTA authority to start a migratory bird take permit system?—Kelly Fuller, American Bird Conservancy

ACCESS FOR SPORTSMEN

- Access is a major concern for sportsmen and one of the reasons often given for decreased participation for hunting. Access is more than just accessibility but having quality places that sportsmen seek out to hunt or fish. How are access and sportsmen's interest being addressed and how are you going to sustain fish and wildlife during renewable energy development?— Steve Belinda, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Secretary Salazar, with only 8% of BLM lands surveyed for historic and cultural resources, how are you planning to provide certainty for energy applicants and avoid siting projects on significant cultural landscapes and destroying irreplaceable archaeological resources?— Denise Ryan, National Trust for Historic Preservation

RENEWABLE ENERGY ON TRIBAL LANDS

- Secretary Salazar, will you support a stream-lined process when “sister agencies” BIO Region/BLM Region seek a long-term lease for green energy development on/near tribal land? This type of lease should be done in less than 11 years, requiring *no* bonding and *no* bidding and *no* fees. BIA Region and BLM Region have a Model Agreement and this has not been done before.—Bill “Jake” Saulque, Chairman and Linda Amelia, Project Manager, Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute Tribe
- Secretary Salazar, the Sacramento Region of the BIA entered into an agreement with the BLM Region to cooperate on cultural and natural resource management. As a result, the Sacramento BIO requested a lease from BLM for a tribal geothermal exploration study on the Benton Paiute Reservation in Mono County, California and adjacent BLM land (~3,800 acres). The Tribe would like to see a streamlined process when a “sister agency” seeks a lease for the direct use of a Tribal community. The proposal lease would be long-term as the Tribe would “develop” the resource when found. This lease process should not take a year as *no* bidding will take place. A focus group should be established to identify a policy and process for cooperation on green projects for Tribes and all relevant federal agencies.—Bill “Jake” Saulque, Chairman and Linda Amelia, Project Manager, Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute Tribe;

OTHER ENERGY-RELATED QUESTIONS

- What is the greatest challenge to reaching 80% clean energy by 2035?—Joe Marhamati, DOE
- Recent experience with nuclear power indicates costs today exceed US construction costs for plants in the 1980s. Problems in Northern Europe with delays and skyrocketing costs mirror the US experience in the 1980s. There is no long-term repository for nuclear waste. How can this technology play a significant role?—Carl Zichella, NRDC
- Secretary Chu, is the half credit that natural gas receives for being a clean energy source based on an analysis of natural gas over its entire life cycle or just an analysis of what happens when natural gas is burned for electricity and other uses? Can you provide citations for the conclusion that natural gas should receive half credit?—Dusty Horwitt, Environmental Working Group
- Secretary Chu, What is the economic justification for carbon sequestration? Does it have a 75% lower cost future soon?—Julia O’Neal, Land Trust for MS Coastal Plain
- Renewable energy development is expanding faster than the natural retirement of older fossil (coal) plants. What needs to be done for the remainder of the fossil fuels that are seeing operational revenues decline along with increasing operational costs as renewable energy market penetration increases?—Barry McDonald, Tetra Tech EC, Inc.
- Secretaries Chu and Salazar, what role do you see for *distributed* generation of renewable energy, conservation and efficiency in meeting our clean energy goals?—Lisa Belenky, Center for Biological Diversity
- Secretary Chu, what is being done at the DOE to encourage and facilitate the production of energy where it is consumed, i.e. roof-top solar and wind, PV coatings for windows, “smart” grids, etc.?—Anonymous