



20% Wind Power Report Card: U.S. Earns a 'B' as Transmission Struggles

The U.S. gets a solid “B” for its 2008 progress toward reaching 20% of electricity supply from wind energy by 2030, but could be “at the high-water mark” for annual installations of new wind capacity without a strong and immediate national policy commitment to renewable energy, AWEA said this week.

AWEA’s “20% Wind Report Card” follows up on the release of the 20% Wind by 2030 Technical Report by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in May 2008. Prepared by an in-house team of experts, some of whom worked on the DOE report, the report card examines progress in four key areas—technology development, manufacturing, siting, and transmission and integration.

“With Americans back to work after a long 4th of July weekend celebrating America’s independence, we think it’s an appropriate time to take a look at one of the key ingredients of energy independence: expanding our use of renewable energy,” explained AWEA Senior Vice President of Public Policy Rob Gramlich.

“The DOE report found that 20% wind energy is feasible and would carry with it a host of benefits for our economy, environment, and energy security, including half a million jobs. While headway has been made, today could become a high-water mark unless Congress enacts a renewable electricity standard (RES) with strong near-term targets.”

The AWEA Report Card gave a C- to the nation’s efforts on transmission, with the other indicator areas graded as follows: Technology Development A-, Manufacturing B+, and Siting B. (The report card does not grade progress on national policies to advance wind power, as those were not examined in the DOE report.)

In 2008 the U.S. made great strides toward the 20% benchmark, with wind accounting for 40% of the nation’s new generating capacity, the Report Card notes. However, in 2009 wind farm development is expected to slow sharply. According to AWEA, key policy ingredients needed to put the U.S. back on track to reach 20% wind by 2030 include:

- A strong RES with aggressive near-term targets in energy legislation now pending in Congress. “A strong RES is essential to give businesses the certainty they need to invest in factories in the U.S. and create new jobs,” Gramlich said. “There is an opportunity to reach 500,000 U.S. jobs related to the wind industry alone under a 20% scenario, but a commitment from manufacturers and wind companies to add jobs requires a commitment from the U.S. policymakers to domestic renewable energy.”
- Energy legislation that addresses top transmission issues—i.e., planning, paying for, and siting new power lines. Commented Gramlich, “New transmission is critical, not only to

develop our abundant renewable energy resources, but to upgrade and improve the reliability of the existing transmission system.”

The full [AWEA 20% Report Card](#) is available online.

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