

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
Washington, DC 20515

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Members Urge White House Support for Wind Farm Development**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – A bipartisan group of 36 members of Congress, including the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, sent a letter today to President Bush and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James L. Connaughton asking that this interagency council strongly support and encourage wind farm development at the same time the Department of Defense (DOD) is studying the effects of wind turbines on military radar systems. The Members urge the White House Council to encourage ways to mitigate any potential interference from wind farms on radar installations.

In January, Congress passed a law requiring the DOD to study and report on whether wind turbines interfere with air defense radar. Until the study is completed, a moratorium has been placed on several wind power projects determined to be in the path of long-range air defense radars. The study has yet to be completed, although the deadline for the report has already passed. Meanwhile, the wind farm moratorium continues, jeopardizing the development of critical wind projects throughout the country.

In the Midwest alone, roughly 13 wind projects, which could power more than a million households, are affected. In Wisconsin, where five of the projects are located, energy companies say that before the moratorium they were prepared to commit at least a billion dollars to their construction and operation.

The letter authored by Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Congressmen Gil Gutknecht (R-MN), Ralph Hall (R-TX), Ron Kind (D-WI) and Mark Udall (D-CO), reflects the bipartisan and multi-regional interest in domestic wind farm development. “Although we eagerly await the findings of the DOD study,” the Members said, “we are concerned that the study will report on interference from wind turbines on radar systems, but will not adequately examine effective mitigation opportunities. Therefore, we are concerned about the impact of the report on overall wind production.”

“We can, and we must, balance the important task of protecting our national security with the need to increase our domestic energy security and wind farms offer one efficient, economical, and environmentally friendly energy source,” said Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). “I would hope that our federal agencies could work together to strive for energy independence without jeopardizing national security,” Baldwin said.

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“I believe we can balance the needs of air traffic safety and national security with the need for clean, renewable energy. Other countries have been able to find solutions to this issue and there’s no reason we can’t either. Mitigation technologies should absolutely be taken into account when studying the coexistence of wind and radar,” said Congressman Gil Gutknecht (R-MN).

“The defense of our country is extremely important to all of us, but so is affordable, reliable energy for our constituents,” said Congressman Ralph Hall (R-TX). Wind power is a growing part of our nation’s generation portfolio, and I would hate to see it unnecessarily harmed. I encourage all parties involved to closely look at all possible solutions that would allow military radars and wind farms to coexist,” Hall said.

“This is a critical time in our nation’s energy future when we need to be encouraging the development of clean, renewable sources of energy, not needlessly adding obstacles that will delay or derail them,” stated Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI). “We recognize the significance of the study, but while the deadline has come and gone, these critical projects remain stalled. It is our hope that the Administration can find ways to allow these important energy projects to continue in a manner that addresses national security concerns,” Kind said.

“No one wants to hinder the effectiveness of our military radar or endanger our homeland security. But we’re being presented with a false choice. In fact, military radar and wind power can and do coexist. Our letter asks the President to seriously consider the various mitigation techniques that are available so that we can take the smart approach – safeguarding our security and developing our wind resources at the same time,” said Congressman Mark Udall (D-CO).

A full copy of the letter and list of signers follows:

September 12, 2006

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20502

Mr. James L. Connaughton  
Chairman  
White House Council on Environmental Quality  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. President and Chairman Connaughton:

We are writing regarding the future of wind power as a clean and renewable energy source serving our domestic needs now and into the future.

As you know, the Department of Defense (DOD) is studying the effects of wind projects on military readiness. While the study is ongoing, the DOD and Department of Homeland Security released an interim  
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policy that resulted in the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) issuance of “Notices of Presumed Hazard” to wind projects located within a radar line of site of the National Air Defense and Homeland Security Radars. “Line of site” is defined as any windmill within a 60-mile radius of a radar center or tower, which means that projects across the nation are impacted, including 13 projects in Midwest States. As a result, wind development has been halted in its tracks, with the threat of permanent derailment.

Although we eagerly await the findings of the DOD study, we are concerned that the study will report on interference from wind turbines on radar systems, but will not adequately examine effective mitigation opportunities. Therefore, we are concerned about the impact of the report on overall wind production.

Homeland security must remain a top priority – and we do not believe that our nation’s defense policy should be hindered. At the same time, our nation’s energy policy also must remain a significant priority. Already, European countries have made significant advances in the production of wind power. In the United Kingdom, Germany, and Belgium, wind power is a proven source of efficient, economical, and environmentally friendly energy.

Our nation has just begun to take steps toward using wind to reduce U.S. dependence on imported energy. In June, the Department of Energy teamed up with the American Wind Energy Association and National Renewable Energy Laboratory to develop an action plan that will provide up to 20% of the nation’s electricity with wind energy. But the current wind development delays may interfere with this goal. In addition, continued delays will jeopardize the ability of wind developers to benefit from the federal wind tax credit, which expires at the end of 2007.

The Administration’s commitment to the 20% goal demonstrates a prevailing view that military radars and wind farms can coexist. In fact, we have been advised that officials from the DOD, along with the Department of Energy, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Department of Interior, have formed a steering group to discuss and evaluate the future of wind power in our nation, in light of DOD’s findings.

It is essential that this interagency group has your support as they balance the important task of protecting our national security with the need to increase our domestic energy security. Therefore, while discussions are ongoing, we respectfully request that you ensure that these agencies strongly consider the various mitigation techniques available and that they carefully evaluate the broader importance of using wind production as a renewable energy source.

With your assistance, wind power can play an important role in reducing our dependence on foreign energy. We look forward to working with you to ensure that this clean and renewable alternative plays a large role in increasing our nation’s energy security.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

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Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress

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Gil Gutknecht  
Member of Congress

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Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

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Ralph Hall  
Member of Congress

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Mark Udall  
Member of Congress

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Judy Biggert  
Member of Congress

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Collin Peterson  
Member of Congress

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Thomas Petri  
Member of Congress

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Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

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Charles Bass  
Member of Congress

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

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Tim Johnson  
Member of Congress

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David Obey  
Member of Congress

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Mark Kennedy  
Member of Congress

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Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress

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Mark Kirk  
Member of Congress

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Steve Israel  
Member of Congress

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Wayne Gilchrest  
Member of Congress

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James Langevin  
Member of Congress

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Sue Kelly  
Member of Congress

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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress

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Stephanie Herseth  
Member of Congress

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John Conyers  
Member of Congress

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Martin Sabo  
Member of Congress

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Earl Pomeroy  
Member of Congress

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Jim Moran  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

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Betty McCollum  
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Luis Gutierrez  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Dennis Kucinich  
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Member of Congress

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Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress

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Joe Barton  
Member of Congress

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