



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Karen Wood, CLF, 617-850-1722 or kwood@clf.org
Jan Kruse, Mass Audubon, 781-259-2134 or jkruse@massaudubon.org
Kate Slusark, NRDC, 212-727-4592 or kslusark@nrdc.org
Emily Robinson, UCS, 312-578-1750 x15 or erobinson@ucsusa.org

Environmental Organizations Applaud Obama Administration Decision To Approve Cape Wind, First Offshore Wind Facility in United States

Pivotal Decision Paves Way for American Clean Energy Development

Facility Could Meet up to 75 Percent of Cape Cod and Islands' Electricity Demand

Boston, MA (April 28, 2010) – Leading environmental organizations hailed today's historic decision by Interior Department Secretary Ken Salazar to provide federal approval for Cape Wind, allowing the country's first utility-scale offshore wind farm to move forward. The announcement signaled the Administration's intentions to support renewable energy development off U.S. shores, a major component of a clean energy economy and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, the organizations said.

Today's announcement ends a nearly nine-year environmental review process, much longer than is typical for a traditional coal power plant. The decision clears the way for Cape Wind to begin the permitting process and develop a 130 turbine wind farm in Nantucket Sound, which could meet as much as 75 percent of the electricity demand for Cape Cod and the Islands.

The Conservation Law Foundation, Mass Audubon, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Union of Concerned Scientists said the decision will help get clean, renewable American energy up and running, cut global warming pollution, fuel economic growth, provide jobs, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and promote energy independence.

“Offshore wind energy can play a major role in repowering America, and Cape Wind shows us how it can be done,” said NRDC Counsel on Air and Energy Kit Kennedy. “We can harness the domestic energy potential off our shores while protecting our oceans at the same time. Cape Wind jumpstarts the American offshore wind industry and sets the stage for the U.S. to become a leader in clean energy.”

The Administration conducted a fair and open process to reach today's decision, gathering extensive input from all interested stakeholders, including environmental organizations, Native American tribes, clean energy advocates, labor unions, community, business and trade groups, public health organizations and local citizens. Cape Wind has strong public support and

cont'd...

demonstrated economic and environmental benefits, and has undergone exhaustive scientific review clearing the project of significant impacts to ocean habitats and wildlife.

“After nine years of project review and independent scientific field research, Mass Audubon has concluded that the Cape Wind project would not pose an ecologically significant threat to the birds and associated marine habitat of Horseshoe Shoal and Nantucket Sound,” said Laura Johnson, president of Mass Audubon. “Renewable energy needs to grow quickly to reduce the most severe effects associated with rapid climate change, yet it must be done responsibly to minimize the impact on the environment. Cape Wind meets those requirements, including extensive monitoring of wildlife and habitat, creating a model for the nation. We support this momentous decision by the Obama Administration, which will position the United States to become a leader in the development of green energy, and, if done responsibly, will benefit both people and wildlife.”

“We’re already seeing changes consistent with global warming across the Northeast, changes that are altering the fundamental character of the region,” said John Rogers, a senior energy analyst in UCS’s Climate and Energy Program. “We can still avoid the worst of climate change, but that means seriously ramping up the nation’s renewable energy use – including offshore wind energy. The Cape Wind project approval means we’ll now have a new arrow in the nation’s renewable energy quiver.”

The Minerals Management Service calculated that, due to reduced need for fossil-fuel generated power to serve the area’s needs, Cape Wind will reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) by nearly one million tons per year, or approximately one percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts from all sources. Cape Wind will play an important role in helping Massachusetts achieve the 10 to 25 percent reduction in emissions by 2020 required by state law.

“Today is a turning point for New England in which we can start to turn smokestacks into wind turbines,” said John Kassel, president of Conservation Law Foundation. “It is fitting that Massachusetts, which has no coal or oil of its own to burn, should be first in the water with offshore wind, a carbon-free energy source which we have in abundance. With Secretary Salazar’s decision, we are ready to bring this project to completion at last and give the nation a glimpse into its clean energy future.”

###

The Conservation Law Foundation (www.clf.org) works to solve the most significant environmental challenges facing New England. CLF's advocates use law, economics and science to create innovative strategies to conserve natural resources, protect public health and promote vital communities in our region. Founded in 1966, CLF is a nonprofit, member-supported organization with offices in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Mass Audubon (www.massaudubon.org) works to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife. Together with more than 100,000 members, we care for 34,000 acres of conservation land, provide educational programs for 225,000 children and adults annually, and advocate for sound environmental policies at local, state, and federal levels. Mass Audubon's mission and actions have expanded since our beginning in 1896 when our founders set out to stop the slaughter of birds for use on women's fashions. Today we are the largest conservation organization in New England. Our statewide network of wildlife sanctuaries, in 90 Massachusetts communities, welcomes visitors of all ages and serves as the base for our work.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.3 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Livingston, MT, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing. For more information, go to www.nrdc.org.

The Union of Concerned Scientists is the leading science-based nonprofit organization working for a healthy environment and a safer world. Founded in 1969, UCS is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has offices in Berkeley, Chicago and Washington, D.C. For more information, go to www.ucsusa.org.