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Wisconsin is Blowing It Illinois Stands to Benefit from Walker's Excessive Wind Regulations

Madison - Just days after appearing on TV and radio in Chicago to remind Illinois that Wisconsin is open for business, Governor Walker introduced a bill that would essentially ban wind development in Wisconsin. The move would leave Wisconsin dependent on other states, including Illinois, to meet our energy demand.

In the bill introduced for consideration in the special session, Governor Walker suggests placing regulations on wind development that are so restrictive, they would essentially prohibit the development of future wind projects in Wisconsin, and even stop some already on the docket. If passed, it's estimated that Wisconsin will immediately lose \$1.8 billion in new wind power investments and jeopardize eleven currently proposed wind projects. Illinois has no restrictions on wind siting.

Wisconsin currently ranks fifth in the nation in the portion of its electricity derived from imported coal. Wisconsin sends more than \$850 million out of state every year to places like Indiana, Wyoming, and Illinois to purchase coal.

"While other states are moving forward with their own energy independence, it appears Governor Walker wants Wisconsin to remain dependent on places like Illinois for our dirty coal habit. This move is sending a very dangerous message to the global wind industry. From those who install wind turbines to those who manufacture them, Governor Walker is suggesting they take their business elsewhere," said Kerry Schumann, Executive Director of Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.

There is growing concern that Governor Walker's rejection of twenty-first century energy projects is becoming a pattern.

Last month, Governor Walker announced that Wisconsin would reject \$810 million in federal stimulus funds meant for high speed rail. Meanwhile, Illinois is cashing their check for \$1.2 billion for the same purpose. The Milwaukee-based train manufacturing company, Talgo, Inc, has since announced plans to move jobs out of Wisconsin. Ironically, Illinois is on the short list of states Talgo, Inc is considering, having sited Illinois' strong supply chain and commitment to forward-thinking transit solutions.

"It's growing increasingly unclear whether Wisconsin is open for the kind of business being done in the second millennium. Wisconsin simply can't afford to send a message to the world that we are opting out of the clean energy economy," concluded Schumann.

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Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to electing conservation leaders to the state legislature and encouraging lawmakers to champion conservation policies that effectively protect Wisconsin's public health and natural resources. More information can be found at <http://conservationvoters.org>.