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Sierra Club Announces Support for Cape Wind Energy Project Calls for End to Congressional Attacks on Renewable Energy Project

Boston, MA – The Sierra Club today announced its conditional support for a 130 wind turbine renewable energy project off Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The Club also today called for completion of the permitting process and an end to congressional attempts to undermine the project.

“Cape Wind represents a major step forward in our nation’s efforts to combat global warming and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and foreign oil,” stated Massachusetts Sierra Club Director James McCaffrey. “Cape Wind must move forward now.”

The Sierra Club encourages the development of renewable energy sources of low environmental impact to reduce our nation’s dependency on fossil fuels which result in pollution, global climate changes and risks to national security associated with the country’s overwhelming reliance on foreign oil. Following a preliminary assessment of the Cape Wind project and a new analysis of field data and scientific studies conducted by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, The Sierra Club has cautiously concluded that the project does not pose a significant ecological threat to birds, marine animals and marine habitat.

“New information and scientific studies indicate that the Cape Wind project will be overwhelmingly beneficial to the natural environment while having minimal impact on wildlife or habitat in the area,” stated McCaffrey.

The Sierra Club’s support is conditional on completion of wildlife impact studies with a finding of no significant threat, appropriate compensation for the usage of public waters, and adoption of a rigorous monitoring program and plan to adopt additional environmental protection measures should unanticipated impacts be revealed once the project is operating. Review of the revised permitting process, now overseen by the Minerals Management Service, as well as an analysis of public statements and commitments by Cape Wind Associates provide strong indication that all of the Club’s conditions for supporting the project will be met by the energy developer.

“Cape Wind has publicly stated they support adaptive management practices to monitor environmental and wildlife impacts, and the federal government is in the process of developing appropriate compensation for usage of public waters and ocean resources. This combined with recent scientific studies that indicate no significant impact to bird species in the area told us the time was right to announce our support,” McCaffrey stated.

Recent weeks have seen a wave of attacks on the project by the US Congress where several members of the MA delegation have supported an amendment to a Coast Guard Reauthorization Bill that would give the MA Governor authority to veto the project.

“We are disappointed that members of Congress refuse to see the potential of Cape Wind, and instead have orchestrated a stealth plan to block it. We are asking our delegation to step aside, let the permitting continue, and let Cape Wind be decided on the merits alone. We should be moving forward with renewable energy, not blocking good projects,” McCaffrey stated.

*For a complete copy of the Sierra Club statement and for more information, please visit
www.sierraclubmass.org/capewind.html*