



**United States Department of Energy**  
**Office of Public Affairs**  
*Washington, DC 20585*

**NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:**  
**Bethany Shively, (202) 586-4940**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Wednesday, May 28th, 2008**

## **DOE to Invest up to \$2.3 Million to Identify Renewable Energy Zones In Western States**

*The Renewable Energy Zones Initiative will promote regional transmission planning and encourage the development of renewable sources of energy*

**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Assistant Secretary for Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability Kevin Kolevar today announced the Department's plans to contribute up to \$2.3 million over three years, subject to annual appropriations, to identify areas in the Western United States with vast renewable energy resources, and expedite the development and delivery of those resources to meet regional energy needs. The Western Renewable Energy Zones (WREZ) project, launched by the Western Governors' Association in cooperation with DOE, furthers the Department's ongoing efforts to address generation and transmission challenges through a regional approach.

"The importance of this initiative is two-fold; not only does it highlight the areas in the West that are able to provide clean, reliable, and abundant sources of energy, it also stresses the importance of regional electricity planning to prevent the balkanization of new renewable sources and develop the infrastructure necessary to carry this power to consumers," Assistant Secretary Kolevar said. "The Bush Administration is committed to diversifying our nation's energy generation mix, and renewables will play a major role in this effort as we try to advance the viability, sustainability, and security of our energy infrastructure."

DOE will carry out the study under a cooperative agreement with WGA. The project will involve four phases: 1) identification of Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) in the Western Interconnection; 2) development of regional transmission plans to enhance access to renewable resources located in these zones; 3) development of a transparent process for bringing together buyers and sellers of electricity generated from renewable energy sources; and 4) building interstate cooperation to address permitting and multi-state cost-allocation issues.

"Unprecedented challenges face the West in meeting the growing demand for electricity, while achieving local and global environmental goals," said Utah Governor Jon Huntsman. "The WREZ project will help us tap our vast renewable resources and develop transmission that considers communities, environmental impacts, and costs."

By identifying concentrations of viable renewable resources both within and outside of zones throughout the Western Interconnection, load-serving entities, transmission providers, renewable energy developers, and state regulators will be able to make better-informed decisions regarding both the costs of renewable power, as well as the development and siting of infrastructure to access areas with renewable sources of energy.

DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability leads the Bush Administration's national effort to modernize the electric grid; enhance security and reliability of the United States' energy infrastructure; and facilitate recovery from disruptions to energy supply. For more information, visit: <http://www.oe.energy.gov/>.

**-DOE-**

*To subscribe to DOE's press release distribution list, please send a plain-text email to [listserv@vml.hqadmin.doe.gov](mailto:listserv@vml.hqadmin.doe.gov) with the following command in the body of the email: Subscribe DOENEWS firstname lastname.*