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Wind Power Development Critical to Meeting Renewable Energy Standard and Foster Economic Development

(Madison) – Wisconsin’s community owned electric utilities today applauded Senator Jeff Plale (D-Oak Creek) and Rep. Soletski (D-Green Bay) for introducing wind siting reform legislation and urged the legislature to act quickly.

Community owned utilities support renewable energy development to help meet state and federal renewable energy standards, address climate change and promote economic development and job creation here in Wisconsin. The most cost effective renewable option for Wisconsin today is wind energy. But a series of local government actions across the state threatens to undermine the ability to site new wind farms and create quality jobs. Senate Bill 185 will provide a fair and transparent process by which wind developers and local governments can work together in the wind siting process.

“Our Member utilities are governed locally by everyday citizens who have to make decisions on behalf of their neighbors in the interest of a reliable, affordable electric provider. It’s not always easy,” said MEUW Associate Director Scott Meske. “But if we don’t develop some state-wide siting standard, and continue to say ‘not here’ to wind development, the jobs and the renewable wind energy will move to other states.”

“Municipal electric utilities are locally owned and focused on making their communities better places to live and work,” said Dan Ebert, WPPI Energy Vice President for Public Policy and External Relations. “By promoting Wisconsin’s wind energy resources we can reduce our reliance on imported fuel, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create high skill, high wage jobs here in Wisconsin.”

Public power communities are regulated locally by their city councils, village boards or utility commissions, and on the state level by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Most of Wisconsin’s municipal electric utilities have been operating for more than a century, and draw their electricity from a diverse mix of sources. “While we recognize that Wisconsin wind power resources aren’t going to meet all of our future electric load needs, wind energy development is a critical component to future economic development opportunities both locally and statewide,” said Meske.

The Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) represents 82 Wisconsin communities that own and operate an electric utility.

Nonprofit power supplier WPPI Energy serves and is owned by 41 member municipal utilities in Wisconsin.

In Dane County, the following communities operate public power electric utilities: Black Earth, Lodi, Mazomanie, Mount Horeb, Stoughton, Sun Prairie, and Waunakee.

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