

MEUW Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 185/AB 256

By Scott J. Meske, MEUW Associate Director; May 12, 2009

TO: Senate Commerce, Energy, Utilities and Rail Committee Members, and Assembly Energy & Utilities Committee Members:

Wisconsin's community owned electric utilities are concerned about meeting state and federal renewable energy standards designed to help move the country away from over-dependence on future coal development. The Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) that represents 82 Wisconsin communities that own and operate an electric utility supports Senate Bill 185, which creates a standard process to site wind power developments.

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 patchwork of local government ordinances across the state threatens to undermine the ability to site new wind farms and create quality jobs our state so desperately needs. 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.

There are very few alternatives left for Wisconsin energy consumers and providers. If Wisconsin says 'no wind wanted here;' we then subject our electric customers to the whims of the transmission grid, and the development of renewable energy sources in other states – both alternatives will drive up the cost of electricity. SB 185/AB256 is about the process of involving local decisions into an issue of critical state wide importance for everyone. 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. Wind energy development is a critical component to future economic development opportunities both locally and statewide.

The Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) represents 82 Wisconsin communities that own and operate an electric utility, and urges the Committees to pass Senate Bill 185 and Assembly Bill 256.

Thank you.

Algoma
Arcadia
Argyle
Bangor
Barron
Belmont
Benton
Black Earth
Black River Falls
Bloomer
Boscobel
Brodhead
Cadott
Cashton
Cedarburg
Centuria
Clintonville
Columbus
Cornell
Cuba City
Cumberland
Eagle River
Elkhorn
Elroy
Evansville
Fennimore
Florence
Gresham
Hartford
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Lake Mills
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New Glarus
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