

AWEA REPORTS 78% GROWTH IN 2008 FOR U.S. SMALL WIND MARKET

U.S. Department of Energy Analysis Finds That Wind Can Be Major Contributor to Energy Mix

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) reports that the U.S. market for small wind turbines – those with capacities of 100 kilowatts (kW) and less – grew 78% in 2008, with a total of 17.3 megawatts (MW) of new installed capacity, offering new evidence that consumer demand for clean energy options is on the rise.

“The U.S. wind industry is a growing bright spot in our domestic economy, and the small wind sector is no exception,” said AWEA CEO Denise Bode. “Strong federal policies like the federal investment tax credit for small wind are critical to future growth, just as adoption of a federal renewable electricity standard (RES) is essential to growth in the utility-scale market.”

U.S. manufacturers sold about half of all small wind turbines installed worldwide last year. U.S. market share amounted to \$77 million of the \$156 million global total. (Worldwide, about 38.7 MW of new small wind capacity was installed in 2008.)

Growth in the small wind sector is largely attributable to increased private investment that has allowed manufacturing volumes to increase, particularly for the commercial segment of the market (systems 21-100 kW). The still-largest segment of the market, residential (1-10 kW), was likewise driven by investment and manufacturing economies of scale, but also rising residential electricity prices and a heightened public awareness of the technology and its attributes.

“Consumers are looking for affordable ways to improve their energy security and reduce their personal carbon footprint,” said Ron Stimmel, AWEA’s Small Wind Advocate. “Small wind technology can be an answer to that search. As government policies have caught up with consumer interest, we’re seeing people all across the U.S. take advantage of this abundant, domestic natural resource and U.S. manufacturers have been able to meet this increasing demand.”

The study included a poll of small wind manufacturers, who project a 30-fold growth in the U.S. small wind market within as little as five years, despite a global recession. Much of this estimated growth will be spurred by the new eight-year 30% federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) passed by Congress in October 2008 and augmented in February 2009.

“Wind energy is an all-around win,” said Bode. “Every day, Americans are saving money on their electricity bills, boosting the national economic recovery, and helping to reduce our collective greenhouse gas emissions. This is great news for all Americans.”