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WIRES Expresses Praise and Support for EFC and CAP Efforts On Electric Transmission Expansion

WASHINGTON, DC – WIRES, a national trade organization that has long encouraged investment in the nation’s high-voltage electric transmission system, today expressed praise and support for the efforts of the Energy Future Coalition (EFC) and the Center for American Progress (CAP) as those organizations work to generate support for upgrading and expanding the electric grid.

On February 20, the EFC – a coalition of business and environmental organizations – issued a “vision statement” which makes clear that new transmission is the principal pre-condition to both domestic growth in renewable generation resources and new efforts to address climate change. For more information, go to: (<http://www.energyfuturecoalition.org/What-Were-Doing/-Smart-Grid>)

Today, CAP (a think-tank closely associated with the new Obama Administration) – in conjunction with Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, former Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of Energy Steve Chu, energy executive T.Boone Pickens and many others – convened a National Clean Energy Project Summit in Washington to deliver a similar message – i.e., that our nation’s energy independence as well as a cleaner environment depend on modernizing and expanding the electricity grid. To view CAP’s white paper on the issue, go to: <http://nationalcleanenergyproject.org/wired-for-progress-building-a-national-clean-energy-smart-grid/#more-161>

WIRES President William Kaul of the CAPX 2020 Coalition in the Midwest expressed enthusiasm for these high-profile projects. “This type of broad-based support for transmission upgrade and expansion is absolutely vital to ensuring the successful expansion of the nation’s high-voltage grid. We expect that, in helping craft federal legislation that addresses the substantial impediments to transmission development, these groups will adopt the kind of pragmatic and progressive approach to regional planning, facilities siting and broad cost allocation for which WIRES has been fighting. There is no time to waste. A national vision for energy and a regulatory framework *to support it* is needed for critical infrastructure development and economic recovery,” Kaul said.

“The first step toward a uniformly strong and accessible transmission system for tomorrow’s economy is a recognition that the grid faces tremendous challenges: 30 percent demand growth by 2030, a new class of generating facilities – often far from customers – stronger bulk power markets, aging facilities, and a fragmented regulatory structure,” stated Jim Hoecker, Counsel for WIRES and former Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. “Let’s declare this National Transmission Week and build on these successes.”

WIRES, together with the American Wind Energy Association and the Environment and Energy Study Institute, is convening a panel of experts on Capitol Hill on Friday, Feb. 27, to address the major issues surrounding transmission planning, siting, and cost allocation. The session is also expected to be addressed by Rep. Jay Inslee (D-WA), a member of the House Energy & Commerce Committee. For more information on that event, go to: http://www.eesi.org/022709_transmission.

WIRES (Working group for Investment in Reliable and Economic electric Systems) is a non-profit trade association of transmission providers, customers, and equipment and service companies formed to promote investment in electric transmission and progressive State and Federal policies that advance energy markets, economic efficiency, and consumer and environmental benefits through development of electric power infrastructure. For more information, visit www.wiresgroup.com or contact Jim Hoecker at 202-639-6500.