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## **New NWF Report Grades Midwest in Efforts to Lead in Clean Energy Economy**

Despite some progress, region needs to step up efforts to create jobs, boost economy, move toward energy independence.

**ANN ARBOR, MICH. (April 21, 2011)**—The Midwest has all the ingredients to be a leader in the clean energy economy, according to a new report released today by the National Wildlife Federation, but will need to step up its efforts to compete effectively in the new energy economy.

“Unfinished Business: What the Midwest Needs to do to Lead in the Clean Energy Economy” issues letter grades—A through F—to the region, assessing regional progress or shortfalls in meeting goals put forward by a bipartisan group of Midwestern governors and stakeholders in 2007 and 2009 to turn around the economic prospects of the region by becoming global leaders in the clean energy economy.

The report finds that clean energy policies are already benefitting parts of the Midwest, creating thousands of jobs and generating revenue for cash-strapped cities. But the region needs to move much faster to realize its potential as a hub of clean energy manufacturing and use.

Read the report at <http://www.nwf.org/midwestenergy>

“The Midwest has seen some important successes—but overall is not reaching its potential to lead in the clean energy economy,” said **Zoe Lipman, senior manager of transportation solutions at the National Wildlife Federation**. “This report affirms that the Midwest has the natural resources, human capital, and sophisticated manufacturing base to lead in the clean energy economy. Our message to public officials: We have a roadmap. Let’s use it.”

“Unfinished Business” evaluates state and regional progress in meeting goals set in a landmark 2009 energy roadmap that was crafted with input from hundreds of state officials, business leaders, utility executives, agricultural interests and environmental advocates.

The energy roadmap, as well as regional infrastructure and jobs plans, made recommendations for state action and regional collaboration across a wide range of energy areas.

The roadmap provides a powerful resource to assist governors and state legislators to effectively address the economic and energy challenges in the region today. Regardless of whether individual states or leaders were involved in the original deliberations, the roadmap and related documents provide the pragmatic insight of a broad, bipartisan group of Midwesterners and interests focused on solving the urgent energy and economic problems the whole region faces.

The NWF report reviews progress to date across the region, identifies notable successes, and assesses grades—A through F—on regional efforts to meet six clean energy goals:

- Renewable energy: Regional grade: B-
- Energy efficiency: Regional grade: B
- Building codes: Regional grade A-
- Low carbon fuels: Regional grade: C+
- Transit: Regional grade: C
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions: Regional grade: D

“Implementing the MGA recommendations on low-carbon fuel policies would not only strengthen the region's agricultural and manufacturing economic base, but would also help the region respond to rising fuel prices while also reducing a major source of carbon emissions,” said **Charles Griffith, Energy and Climate Program Director at the Ecology Center**. “It’s a win-win – we keep more of our dollars in the region, while also doing our part to reduce carbon pollution.”

According to the report, “There has been important progress within our region in capitalizing on the clean energy economy, but that needs to be more fully realized over the next two years.” It continues: “Absent prompt government action on policies that would support the clean energy economy, the Midwest will lose more of its competitive advantage to China and other nations.”

“Unfinished Business” also examines progress Midwestern states are making to meet critical infrastructure improvements and regional jobs initiatives, among them:

- Upgrading the region’s **power grid** to take advantage of the renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, reduce overall energy use, make existing system more efficient and create new businesses;
- Pioneering **biofuels** development and use to revitalize rural communities, invigorate regional manufacturing base, reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation sector, and lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy;
- Building regional **high-speed rail** system to create jobs, cut air pollution, and reduce dependence on foreign oil;

- Moving forward with **carbon pipeline** to capture and store carbon emissions from power plants in the region; and,
- Adopting policies and partnerships to support **jobs collaboration** that ensure that the region's education and training programs equip the workforce with the skills necessary to participate in the new energy economy.

The report highlights regional case studies and best practices, and includes state-level assessments of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

"Unfinished Business" finds that Midwestern states rank among the Top 10 job-creating states in all five categories of the clean energy economy, including: clean energy (Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan); energy efficiency (Ohio, Wisconsin); environmentally friendly production (Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa and Illinois); conservation and pollution mitigation (Ohio, Illinois, Michigan); and training for clean energy jobs (Illinois).

Studies have shown that clean energy could create as many as 1.2 million jobs in the Midwest over the next decade, with one-third of those in high-wage, highly skilled manufacturing positions and construction jobs. Those gains, the report warns, hinge on state and regional action.

"The MGA Energy Roadmap charts a course toward more jobs, more energy independence and a stronger economy overall," said **Keith Reopelle, senior policy director at Clean Wisconsin**. "We encourage Midwestern governors to embrace the job-creating power of clean energy policies to help pave the way for long-term prosperity for the millions of people who call the region home."

The report urges Midwestern states to enact policies that foster greater energy efficiency, promote the use renewable energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to create jobs and revitalize its region's economy. Among the report's recommendations:

- Establish or upgrade renewable energy standards;
- Address power transmission issues;
- Establish strong statewide energy efficiency goals;
- Act to adopt the most recent residential and commercial building codes;
- Adopt low carbon fuel standards; and,
- Improve transportation efficiency and provide more transportation choices.

"We have a roadmap that will create jobs, revitalize communities, save consumers money and improve the quality of life of millions," said **Frank Szollosi, policy coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation**. "Now is the time for our region's leaders to act."

For more information visit: <http://www.nwf.org/midwestenergy>

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