



PRESS RELEASE — EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY MAY 5

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NATIONAL SURVEY: OPPOSITION TO POWER TRANSMISSION LINES Americans Willing To Say ‘Yes’ For Wind-Generated Electricity ‘No’ to Federal Authority to Site Them in Their Community

CHICAGO — A majority of Americans oppose new high-voltage transmission lines in their community, but that opposition drops precipitously to 17% if those lines are delivering clean, renewable energy from wind. Support for new transmission lines leaps from just 46% to 83% when respondents are asked specifically about high-voltage transmission lines delivering wind power.

On the issue of who should have authority to site a new transmission line in their community, however, Americans oppose federal siting authority 57% to 43%.

Asked who should have ultimate authority to approve a high-voltage transmission line in their community, 60% say local government, 19% support state government approval, and 10% say the federal government. (The remaining 11% said some ‘other’ body should have authority.)

The wind power industry is currently urging Congress to enact stronger federal authority to approve expanded transmission line projects needed to deliver the electricity generated by renewable energy like wind. Citizen and local opposition have impacted a number of projects, including in New York, Virginia and the Upper Midwest.

The survey of 1,239 adults nationwide was conducted last week (April 21-23) by The Saint Consulting Group, the political land use consulting firm that also issues the annual Saint Index® survey of attitudes toward real estate development projects, including energy-generation projects such as wind, nuclear and hydro facilities.

Ben Kelahan, energy practice leader at Saint Consulting, said the new results are a clear sign that Americans support cleaner, renewable power and that it has carried over to the distribution of that power through their own backyard.

“High-voltage transmission lines generate some of the most adamant NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) opposition in the country. That such a large percentage of people are willing to allow green lines in their community says a lot about the awareness and importance of renewable energy and climate change issues in addition to the education efforts undertaken by the renewable energy industry,” Kelahan said.

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The results are being released Tuesday in Chicago at the Windpower 2009 Conference & Exhibition, sponsored by the American Wind Energy Association. The survey involved a demographically representative sample of 1,239 American adults (18+) based on U.S. Census data for age, ethnicity, gender, region and income.

The transmission line findings come on the heels of 2009 U.S. Saint Index results that showed support for local wind farm projects. Eighty-two percent of Americans said they support a wind farm project in their community — an increase from 76% a year earlier. Opposition to a local wind project dropped to 15%, which is down five percentage points from last year, the Saint Index found. Slightly more than one in 10 adults (11%) say a large wind project could diminish health and welfare.

The Saint Consulting Group began operations in 1983 and today is the global leader in land use political consultancy. Saint Consulting has 10 offices in the U.S. and an international office in London, England. As experts in land use politics, Saint Consulting provides political campaign expertise to win complex or controversial land use permitting decisions. Among the property sectors that use its services are: aggregates, food retail, shopping centers, hospitals, waste management, gaming, mixed-use developers, housing, utilities and heavy industrial.

NOTE: Saint Consulting President Mike Saint and Senior Vice President-Energy Ben Kelahan are in Chicago for the Windpower 2009 Conference and are available for comment or interviews.

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