

# The South – The Next Frontier for Wind Energy

The Southern Wind Energy Association (SWEA) works within an eleven-state region to identify and remove barriers to wind development by focusing on regulatory legislative work. Wind development throughout the SWEA region has historically lagged due in part to available wind resource, low electricity prices, lack of policy incentives and misinformation regarding wind energy.

However, utilities throughout the south have started to develop a track record with wind energy. **In fact, nearly 3.6 gigawatts of wind energy power purchase agreements (PPAs) are already in place in the SWEA region due to the ability for wind energy to reduce ratepayer costs.** As the utilities become more adept at handling wind energy, there appears to be a desire to purchase higher quantities of wind power.

With the combination of new turbine technology, policy stability, and the retirement of outdated coal units, **this year is shaping up to be a big year for wind energy in the South.** Below is SWEA's strategic plan for the year to advance wind power in the region:

## Clean Power Plan – Stay or Go?

Prior to the stay issued by the Supreme Court on the Clean Power Plan (CPP) in early 2016, SWEA engaged with many states agencies in the region on the opportunities wind energy can provide as a compliance option. Currently, many states across the country have effectively suspended official CPP stakeholder meetings and state implementation plan (SIP) development. Louisiana has announced that it plans to continue developing a CPP stakeholder process. However, many agencies in the south have stated that informal discussions can continue. The Supreme Court is likely to issue a response on the CPP in 2017. Soon thereafter, states are likely to reinstate their stakeholder processes. Prior to then, SWEA will continue to develop analyses and materials for use in early 2017. SWEA will also host webinars and events to educate stakeholders

## Integrate Resource Planning Engagement

Major utilities throughout the region will be going through periodical Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) processes. These multi-year IRP processes are used by utilities to evaluate generation resource supply and demand for up to 20-year timeframes. As utilities go through the IRP process, SWEA will engage utilities and provide an industry voice, data and analysis to ensure utility modeling inputs accurately reflect the opportunities and planning requirements for wind energy use. SWEA will also provide access for the wind industry to utility decision makers.

SWEA's IRP advocacy is focused on securing request for proposals (RFP) for significant quantities of renewable energy. Over the past two years, SWEA has engaged in seven total IRPs located in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee.



## Production Tax Credit – Act Now or Lose Billions

With the long-term extension of the federal Production Tax Credit, it is more important than ever that utilities and regulators understand the benefits of immediately contracting for wind energy resources. As an additional pilot part of this strategy, SWEA may identify a utility that has no IRP process (like MEAG, Power South or SMEPA) to directly engage regarding their procurement process and improve that process. An important part of SWEA's advocacy is **ensuing these utilities act quickly on securing new wind energy power purchase agreements.** According to a recent SWEA analysis, billions of dollars in wind power savings will be lost if utilities do not act fast enough to contract for significant amounts of wind power resources

## Connect with Elected Officials and Government Agencies

Elected officials and government agencies at the federal, state and local levels provide opportunities and threats to the wind industry in the South. Proposed wind farm development in various parts throughout the region has been met with skepticism and untenable state and local regulation. Alternatively, federal incentives and National Environmental Policy Act reviews provide opportunities to highlight the benefits of wind energy and create supportive environments for the wind industry. As such, SWEA will work with elected officials and government agencies to protect and promote wind energy use in the region.

To learn more about SWEA, visit [southernwind.org](http://southernwind.org) or contact [simon@southernwind.org](mailto:simon@southernwind.org).

