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DOE Marks First Anniversary of EPA Act & Releases National Electric Transmission Congestion Study

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Samuel W. Bodman today marked the one-year anniversary of President Bush's signing of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPA Act), highlighting its progress in delivering clean energy alternatives and spurring investment in renewable and nuclear energy. DOE also released the National Electric Transmission Congestion Study authorized under the Energy Policy Act, which provides analysis of generation and transmission capacity across the U.S. and identifies critical areas that need attention to meet growing demand.

"Completion of the National Electric Transmission Congestion Study is an important step on the path to modernizing our nation's aging electric power infrastructure and is a crucial step toward realizing the President Bush's goal of a modern, more efficient electric power delivery system," Secretary Bodman said. "I am confident the Department's actions will help facilitate the infrastructure growth necessary to meet the demands of our growing economy."

Based on the research documented in this study, Secretary Bodman may select and designate geographic areas as "National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors." This can help facilitate the construction of new transmission capacity that will relieve congestion problems. DOE will request comments from interested parties concerning the possible designation of National Corridors as a step toward relieving congestion in these areas. The Department is required by law to update the congestion study every three years, but in the interim, the Department plans to issue annual reports detailing progress regarding congestion challenges identified in the current study.

The congestion study identifies three types of congestion areas that merit further attention. The first are categorized as the most severely congested areas - "Critical Congestion Areas," of which the study identified two critical areas: Southern California and the Atlantic coastal area from the New York City area to northern Virginia.

The second category, "Congestion Areas of Concern," acknowledges four areas that need close watching and further study to determine the magnitude of their congestion problems. These include: New England; the Phoenix-Tucson area; the Seattle-Portland area; and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The third type, "Conditional Congestion Areas," identifies areas where congestion is not presently acute, but could become so if considerable new electric generation were to be built without associated transmission capacity. These areas include Montana-Wyoming; Dakotas-Minnesota; Kansas-Oklahoma; Illinois, Indiana, and Upper Appalachia; and the Southeast.

"Electricity congestion increases consumer bills and challenges the reliable delivery of power to our homes. To ensure electricity reliability across the country, it is important that we do everything we can to facilitate investment in new generation and transmission capacity," Director of the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability Kevin Kolevar said. "Affirmative government and industry decisions need to be made in the next few years if timely development of needed new resources in these areas is to occur."

The National Electric Transmission Congestion Study and additional information concerning the designation of National Corridors is available at <http://www.oe.energy.gov/>.

In addition to releasing the congestion study, Secretary Bodman capped off a series of events held over the past two weeks highlighting the first anniversary of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, by releasing a 12-page, full color booklet. The booklet, *On the Road to Energy Security* outlines many of the positive impacts EAct has had since its passage. EAct authorized a number of provisions that can help increase our nation's energy security, reduce our reliance on foreign sources of fuel, and provide cleaner energy to fuel our economy.

"The Energy Policy Act has set the country on a path forward to increasing clean energy sources that will power our robust economy for generations to come," Secretary Bodman said.

Over the past two weeks, Secretary Bodman held a number of events highlighting the Energy Policy Act. On July 26, Secretary Bodman was joined at an event on Capitol Hill by Senator Pete Domenici and Congressman Joe Barton to kick-off the first anniversary celebration of the Energy Policy Act. Last week, the Secretary visited Illinois to announce \$250 million for two new bioenergy centers, which will accelerate basic research on the development of cellulosic ethanol and other biofuels. Later that day he traveled Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to tour a wind turbine manufacturing facility and highlighted the Administration's efforts to improve wind energy technology and reduce the cost of wind generated electricity. On Friday, August 4, Secretary Bodman visited Georgia Power in Atlanta, and announced a total of \$2 billion in risk insurance for the next six nuclear reactors that are built to protect against losses associated with bureaucratic and legal delays. And yesterday, Secretary Bodman was in Baltimore where he announced \$2 billion in loan guarantees to help spur investment in new or significantly improved energy technologies that avoid, reduce, or sequester air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

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