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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## Environmental And Faith Groups Urge Midwest Governors To Follow Through On Promises In Climate Accord

***In Advance of October Meeting of Midwestern Governors Association, Letter to Nine Governors Urges Them to Take Action on Clean Energy***

Nearly two years after Midwest governors signed landmark agreements to invest in clean energy and reduce pollution that causes global warming, environmental and faith groups from across the region joined together in urging the Governors to adopt a series of policies that would transform those goals into reality in a letter sent on Tuesday.

The letter is addressed to Midwestern governors who embraced a 2007 Energy Security and Climate Stewardship Platform developed under the auspices of the Midwest Governors Association (MGA). The signatories to the platform include Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, South Dakota and Indiana, as well as the provinces of Ontario, CA, and Manitoba, CA.

“We’re thankful that so many governors throughout the Midwest recognized in 2007 that investments in cleaner energy represent an opportunity to boost economic development and combat air pollution related to fossil fuels,” said Keith Reopelle, Senior Policy Director at Clean Wisconsin. “Since then, job markets throughout Midwest have slumped, and now, more than ever, we need the economic jolt that would come with a concerted, uniform commitment to unleashing the power of clean energy, reducing electricity use and limiting carbon pollution.”

State laws requiring utilities to draw 25 percent of electricity from renewable resources, such as wind and solar power, by 2025, while reducing electricity use by 2 percent and natural gas use by 1.5 percent, are among the measures supported by the 51 environmental and faith organizations that signed the letter.

The policies the groups recommended emerged from four advisory groups that were assembled, by the governors, in the wake of the 2007 agreements. In their letter, the environmental groups asked the Governors to enact these measures through legislation or executive action, predicting they would capitalize on the Midwest’s existing industrial base and allow the region to blossom as a leader in clean energy manufacturing.

The groups asked the governors to:

- Call for state legislation to establish or upgrade Renewable Energy Standards (RES) that require utilities to acquire at least 25% of their electric energy from renewable resources by 2025 and 30% by 2030.
- Address electricity transmission issues including inter-jurisdictional siting and cost and revenue allocation that are threatening to hinder renewable energy development in the Midwest.
- Take steps, through legislation and/or executive action, to achieve the statewide energy efficiency standards of 2% annually by adopting policies that require utilities to reduce use by at least 2% annually for electricity, and at least 1.5% annually for natural gas, and adopt policies that govern administration of programs and funding to achieve these standards.
- Take steps to adopt policies that keep state residential energy and commercial energy building codes current with the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and ASHRAE 90.1 2007 edition and subsequent upgrades.
- Call for state legislation to establish Low Carbon Fuel Standards based on a common regional policy being developed by an MGA's advisory group
- Move aggressively to improve transportation efficiency -- provide ways for residents and businesses to meet their needs while reducing costly vehicle-miles driven -- by enabling and promoting pay-as-you-drive insurance; building transit, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and intercity passenger rail; improving freight rail corridors; and fostering well-designed, compact development.

The groups also urged the governors to continue to pursue a regional cap and trade program by acting on the final recommendations of the Midwestern Accord Advisory Group. Governors of six states – IL, IA, KS, MI, MN, WI and the province of Manitoba – signed the Accord, along with the Energy Security and Climate Stewardship Platform in 2009. They then appointed a diverse group of stakeholders including utilities, industry, labor and environmental groups to make recommendations on how to design and implement a Midwest cap and trade program for greenhouse gases. The advisory group unanimously agreed to recommendations in May of this year. The groups said it could serve as a model for pending consideration of federal climate change legislation.

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