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Extension of wind production tax credit

Congress needs to extend a wind production tax credit to help manufacturers that serve the wind industry avoid layoffs, said Energy Secretary Steven Chu.

The wind production tax credit won't be permanent, as even the American Wind Energy Association has come out in support of a credit that will phase out over time as the cost of producing electricity from wind turbines becomes more and more competitive, Chu said.

The wind energy investment tax credits have been opposed by congressional Republicans who don't consider it a wise use of federal tax dollars to help support wind generation, which is more expensive per unit of energy to produce than traditional electricity generation sources like coal and natural gas.

Chu said continuing the tax credit -- set to expire at the end of this year -- was important to help send a signal that the U.S. supports clean energy and the manufacturing jobs linked with it.

If the tax credit ended in 10 years, then federal support for the wind industry will have lasted about 50 years, whereas tax credits for the oil and gas industry have been in place for a century, Chu said.

"The uncertainty that is now hitting his industry is causing some companies to start doing layoffs, and that's rough. You don't want to break this momentum," Chu said. "What we need more than anything else is not even a long-term commitment -- it's a midterm commitment."

Critics of the Obama administration, including Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, have called for eliminating the wind energy tax credit. Johnson has signed on to a bill that would eliminate all federal energy tax credits, including not only those for alternative energy but those for oil and gas production as well.

The Republican National Committee criticized Chu and Barrett for a tour that hopes to "push their backward vision on energy in our state, and force the taxpayers of Wisconsin to pick up the check," Nicole Tieman, Wisconsin spokeswoman for the RNC, said in an email. "President Barack Obama has been gambling American taxpayer dollars on risky energy 'investments' such as Solyndra, which have produced nothing but more struggles for middle-class families around the country."

Electricity Pricing Areas - Jul 17, 2012

July

On-Peak	Per kWh
West Hub	\$.05235
NI Hub	\$.04980

ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
July, 2011	\$.05170
Aug, 2011	\$.04064
Sep, 2011	\$.03058
Oct, 2011	\$.02968
Nov, 2011	\$.02816
Dec, 2011	\$.02971
Jan, 2012	\$.03043
Feb, 2012	\$.02963
Mar, 2012	\$.02894
April, 2012	\$.02659
May, 2012	\$.02816
June, 2012	\$.03089
July 1 thru July 16	\$.04059

Extended Temperature Forecast:

Chicago Area

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	99	88	89	83	87
Low	78	75	72	72	73

