

Union of Quebec Municipalities Calls for Standard Offer Contracts in Quebec

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By Paul Gipe and Nancy Nies

The Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Union of Municipalities of Quebec (UMQ) passed a resolution calling for Standard Offer Contracts in for wind energy in Quebec similar to those in Ontario at their December 1 board meeting in Montreal.

The resolution calls upon Quebec's Minister of Natural Resources to adopt a Standard Offer Contract mechanism ("prix fixe") for a block of 250 MW of wind generating capacity as part of Quebec's energy policy.

Quebec had previously announced plans for the development of 4,000 MW of wind capacity. As part of the plan, the government set aside 250 MW for municipalities and another 250 MW for First Nations.

UMQ's action marks the first formal demand for a program in Quebec like that launched November 22 in Ontario.

On October 10 in Rimouski, Quebec, a raucous conference of 400 regional activists and local politicians questioned the development of large wind farms on the Gaspé peninsula and demanded support for regional development of locally-initiated projects. The Rimouski conference ("Le Defi des Eoliennes") concluded by also calling on the government to model its 250 MW municipal wind program on Ontario's Standard Offer program.

The UMQ resolution, in part a response to municipal activists on the Gaspé peninsula, argues that the Quebec government should select wind projects on the basis of social, economic and environmental acceptability, implying that selection should not be based solely on the lowest cost. Notably, the resolution asks the government to create a Standard Offer program for the 250 MW block.

For further information on the resolution, contact Jean Langevin, UMQ, jlangevin@umq.qc.ca.