

Wind-power market limit swept clear for foreign firms (China Daily)

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China will drop a requirement that most of the components of wind power-related equipment be made within its borders, a beneficial move for foreign companies who argue that they have been locked out of China's wind-power market.

Commerce Minister Chen Deming announced the move at a press conference in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, to repeal the requirement set in 2007 by the National Development and Reform Commission. Chen was attending the 20th China-US Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade.

The regulation had stated that all local governments use more than 70 percent locally made technologies and products in their wind power facilities.

"The US had hoped that there would be no local content requirement in the wind power market and we agreed with that," China's National Energy Administration chief Zhang Guobao told reporters yesterday. "So US wind power technology will enter Chinese market equally and freely."

The Global Wind Energy Council recently announced China will become the biggest growth market for wind power generating capacity this year, ahead of the US.

A recent study by Harvard University and Beijing's Tsinghua University found that wind power could supply 15 percent of China's electricity by 2030 with a \$900-billion investment.

US Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke expressed his pleasure at the move, saying "this will open up China's energy market to US companies and create jobs for Americans."

Locke, US Trade Representative Ron Kirk and Vice-Premier Wang Qishan yesterday co-chaired the first joint commission meeting under the administration of US President Barack Obama, two weeks before Obama's first visit to China.

China's local wind turbine manufacturing industry has grown dramatically due to the recent economic stimulus spending.

China-made equipment companies have emerged as a major force in the international wind market. Until recently, they had only won small contracts in the US, Cuba, Peru, Africa and the Middle East.

The two countries yesterday also signed a pact to promote the establishment of the China-US Energy Cooperation Program, which will focus on commercialization of clean energy solutions.

Twenty-one US companies from a broad range of fields, such as information technology, aviation and green energy, will get involved in the program.

"This is a very important effort to help drive US-China commercial cooperation in clean energy," Locke said.

For the recognition of China's market economy status, Chen still urged the US side to take action "as soon as possible."

The two sides also signed another 10 documents for further cooperation in trade, advanced technology, environment protection, tourism and aviation.