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U.S. EPA Releases Draft Plan for RE-Powering America's Land

As part of its continuing efforts to promote the development of alternative energy sources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) yesterday released its draft management plan to promote reuse of contaminated land and mining sites for renewable energy projects. This effort is part of the EPA's RE--Powering America's Land initiative, which seeks to advance renewables, including wind, solar, biomass, geothermal and landfill gas energy projects, on currently and formerly contaminated land and mine sites. RE-Powering America's Land was launched in September 2008. The federal initiative aims to "decrease the amount of green space used for development, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide health and economic benefits to local communities, including job creation."? Stakeholders participating in the development of the draft plan included state and local governmental agencies, companies in the renewable energy sector, finance entities, utilities, landowners, parties responsible for cleaning up sites, community organizations, and nonprofits. The draft plan seeks a unified federal approach to promoting the siting of renewable energy sources on contaminated land. Its goals include providing incentives and technical assistance for siting renewable energy projects, assisting communities in identifying sites for reuse, and improving communication and data sharing. The draft plan identifies specific actions that the EPA plans to take and the expected time frames required to accomplish each action. Specific actions include:

- evaluation of the advantages of siting renewable energy on contaminated lands (expected to be completed by November 2010);
- development of case studies describing how developers were able to lease certain sites and how to overcome barriers to the reuse of contaminated land (expected to be published on the EPA website later this fall); and
- expansion of the toolbox of resources for use by communities and stakeholders, including guidance, case studies and fact sheets (expected to be available by spring 2011).

The EPA is launching a webinar series on the RE-Powering America's Land initiative. The first webinar is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, at 3:00 p.m. EDT.?The deadline for public comment on the EPA's draft management plan for its RE-Powering America's Land initiative is November 30, 2010. Comments may be submitted to Lura Matthews at Matthews.Lura@epamail.epa.gov.?A link to the draft plan is available here.