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## The Denali Commission focuses efforts on alternative-renewable energy projects

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The Denali Commission is requesting Letters of Interest for developing alternative-renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in Alaska. Commissioners approved a \$5,000,000 line item in the Commission's FY07 Work Plan specifically targeting projects that provide energy using alternative sources including: wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric, biomass, river or ocean or sources of coal and natural gas.

With the responses provided through this Letter of Interest process, the Commission will develop an inventory of projects throughout the state and play a role in developing some of those projects.

"Despite being an oil producing state, Alaska has some of the highest per capita electric power costs in the U.S., particularly in our rural, isolated villages scattered throughout the state," stated George Canelos, Federal Co-Chair at the Commission. The Commission will focus on alternative-renewable projects to find new solutions to this growing need in rural Alaska.

"Generally, the Commission has funded alternative energy projects only as part of our overall power plant and bulk fuel upgrades in communities on the statewide deficiency lists, for example wind turbines in Selawik and Toksook Bay," said Kathy Prentki, the Energy Program Manager at the Commission. "We have also funded some stand-alone hydroelectric projects such as Falls Creek and Kasidaya Creek," Prentki stated. This year, the Commission is looking at new alternative projects including a hydrokinetic turbine project in Eagle and a geothermal resource assessment in Naknek.

Hydrokinetic turbines, or 'underwater electric kites' are a new technology. These turbines harness the power of water and are installed in locations where sufficient water flow occurs like the Yukon River. Alaska Power Company (APC), a subsidiary of Alaska Power and Telephone Company (AP&T), is leading this revolutionary strategy in Eagle; if proven successful, this technology could be installed in other locations with similar generation requirements. This project will provide more efficient power generation and less reliance on diesel for Eagle and Eagle Village—perhaps reducing diesel needs by over 56,000 gallons per year.

Geothermal power has the potential to produce tens and possibly hundreds of megawatts of electric power in Alaska. The geothermal region of Alaska referred to as the 'Ring of Fire Volcano's', includes the Aleutians and the Alaska Peninsula as potential geothermal power projects for electricity production. The Commission participated in the first geothermal power plant in Alaska at Chena Hot Springs and hopes to repeat that success with Naknek Electric Association (NEA) on the Alaska Peninsula.

NEA is exploring geothermal power production in an effort to provide reliable and affordable electricity for Bristol Bay and Lake Regions within Southwest Alaska. The Commission has provided funding this summer to support seismic testing and three dimensional modeling to help NEA determine the best place for drilling a deep well. "Geothermal power is viewed as sustainable, an important factor for the Denali Commission," said Canelos.

The deadline for submitting Letters of Interest to the Denali Commission is August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. Submittal requirements can be found on the Commission's website at [www.denali.gov](http://www.denali.gov).

The Commission's "goal through this inventory process is to play an active role with our partners to find cost effective energy solutions for the people in rural Alaska," said Canelos.

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