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FLORIDA RECOGNIZES OCTOBER AS ENERGY AWARENESS MONTH

--State joins the nation to highlight importance of renewable energy sources--

TALLAHASSEE – Recognizing of the importance of conserving energy, Governor Jeb Bush signed a proclamation recognizing October as Energy Awareness Month. Florida joins federal and state partners nationwide to encourage Americans to conserve energy at home and in the workplace.

“Florida’s growing economy and quality of life depend on a secure, reliable supply of energy,” said Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Colleen M. Castille. “The 2006 Florida Energy Act passed just this year provides incentives for conservation and promotes the development of alternative energy technologies such as ethanol, solar and hydrogen through grant programs and targeted investments.”

During Energy Awareness Month, Florida is celebrating its first sales tax holiday for energy efficient products during Energy Efficient Week, October 5 – 11, 2006. Part of the 2006 Florida Energy Act, Energy Efficient Week encourages Floridians to invest in energy efficient products by providing relief from sales tax for approved products and appliances for up to \$1,500. Qualifying energy efficient products include a dishwasher, clothes washer, air conditioner, ceiling fan, incandescent or fluorescent light bulb, dehumidifier, programmable thermostat, or refrigerator that meets all requirements of the ENERGY STAR program.

Spearheaded by Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature, the 2006 Florida Energy Act takes the first comprehensive step toward a diverse, reliable and secure energy future by reducing regulatory barriers to expedite electric generation capacity and providing rebates, grants and tax incentives to drive the development of alternative fuel technologies. The four year, \$100 million plan will diversify the state’s fuel supply, reduce Florida’s dependence on imported oil, spur economic growth and promote energy conservation and efficiency.

As part of the 2006 Florida Energy Act, the State is encouraging the use of hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles, including biodiesel and ethanol, shaping the market for fuel-efficient travel and clean air technology. With a growing fleet, more than 25 percent of DEP’s fleet is comprised of clean energy transportation, including 125 hybrid vehicles and more than 290 alternative fuel vehicles.

The Florida Energy Office is the state’s primary center for energy policy under Governor Bush. In addition to developing and implementing Florida’s energy policy, the Energy

Office coordinates all federal energy programs delegated to the state, including energy supply, demand, conservation and allocation.

For more information on energy in Florida, visit www.floridaenergy.org. To view the Governor's proclamation, visit http://www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/news/2006/proc/energy_month.pdf.