



Cleveland’s “Icebreaker Wind” means new jobs, clean energy for Northeast Ohio

Greater Cleveland poised to be innovation leader with Lake Erie wind energy project

Cleveland - July 19, 2018 - A six-turbine wind energy project in Lake Erie will create clean energy and new jobs for the region and is primed to stimulate an offshore freshwater wind industry.

Icebreaker Wind is being planned and developed by the Lake Erie Energy Development Corporation (LEEDCo) and Icebreaker Windpower Inc. LEEDCo is a non-profit regional economic development public-private partnership whose members include the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation, Port of Cleveland, and Cuyahoga, Lake, Ashtabula and Lorain counties as well as Erie County, PA. Icebreaker Windpower Inc. is owned by Fred. Olsen Renewables USA.

The second public hearing on the project is being held by the Ohio Power Siting Board today at 6 p.m. in Cleveland City Hall Council Chambers. Earlier this month, the staff of that board recommended conditional approval of the project after an extensive, 18-month review process.

The siting board staff, with input from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, determined that the project “serves the public’s interest” with “minimal adverse environmental impact.” LEEDCo said the conditional approval was a big step forward for Icebreaker, though more work remains to be done before construction could begin on the six-turbine demonstration project located eight miles off the Cleveland shore.

Icebreaker Wind is being developed under the strictest of environmental regulations and reviews by 14 local, state and federal agencies. The project has been endorsed by environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Ohio Environmental Council.

For many reasons – economic impact, jobs and clean energy – Icebreaker also has the support of community leaders, labor unions and many elected officials across the state.

“This will be the first ever freshwater wind project in North America,” said Cleveland City Councilman Matt Zone. “It will allow us to be a Great Lakes leader in clean energy, and allow the Northeast Ohio region to tap into a multi-billion dollar industry that is underway elsewhere across the country. It will help brand us as a progressive, innovative city and state that is moving forward with development of clean energy.”

LEEDCo President Dr. Lorry Wagner said Icebreaker Wind will help catalyze future freshwater wind projects and could make Ohio a leader in the offshore wind energy industry and the manufacturing and marine construction supply chain that will be needed for such projects here and on the east coast.

“We have the support of many manufacturers in the region, as well as unions which represent some of their employees and the construction industry,” said Wagner. “This project is a game-changer on many fronts, not the least of which is creating clean energy.”

Already, more than 275 area companies in Ohio have registered to be part of it – including local manufacturers and electrical and marine construction companies.

The project is supported by many labor unions, including the Ironworkers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Cleveland Building & Construction Trades Council - which represents 17 craft unions – and others.

“The project will create immediate jobs for our members who live in communities throughout Northeast Ohio and can be the impetus for a clean energy industry here that would create thousands of good paying jobs and pump hundreds of millions of dollars into the economy,” said Dennis Meaney of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 38. “Organized labor is very supportive of Icebreaker Wind because we see the enormous potential for jobs.”

The Cleveland Foundation has been involved in the offshore wind project since its inception 12 years ago; one of the paramount reasons is because of Icebreaker’s potential to create a new industry and the thousands of jobs that could accompany it, said Ronn Richard president and CEO of the foundation and chairman of the LEEDCo board. “Northeast Ohio needs to be innovative and forward-thinking if we are to grow and the wind energy business is one way to do that. It is exploding worldwide – there are more than \$5 billion of offshore wind farms planned for the East Coast of the U.S. alone.”

LEEDCo is working with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and stakeholders on a bird and bat conservation plan to ensure that any impacts to birds and bats are minimal. They are, for example, shutting down the turbines during periods of low cloud cover during peak migration as an exercise of extreme caution. LEEDCo will continue to work with the agencies and stakeholders to ensure no significant environmental impact.

Jane Harf, Executive Director of Green Energy Ohio, said LEEDCo has collaborated with many community stakeholders since 2009 and said the organization, which is dedicated to promoting environmental and economically sustainable energy policies and practices in Ohio, supports the project.

“The Great Lakes do not exist for our personal, temporary enjoyment,” she said. “Those who are truly committed to saving our beautiful Lake understand the necessity of addressing the very real threats of climate change.” She added that renewable energy produced by Icebreaker Wind will “ensure the health—and beauty – of the Great Lakes.”

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Icebreaker Wind: A New Energy for Northeast Ohio Clean Air, New Jobs

Partial list of individuals, organizations supporting the project

Labor

- Construction and Building Trades
- Ironworkers
- Pipefitters Local 120
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters
- Building Laborers' Local 310
- International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots

Environmental groups

- Sierra Club
- Ohio Environmental Council
- Ohio Citizen Action
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Green Energy Ohio
- Mom's Clean Air Force

Elected officials

- Senator Sherrod Brown
- Senator Rob Portman
- U.S. Rep. Dave Joyce
- U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur
- U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge
- U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan
- Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson
- Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish