RENEWABLE ENERGY CREATES WISCONSIN JOBS AND PROMOTES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Renewable energy sources, like wind, solar and biomass, promote both job creation and economic development in Wisconsin. When the capital necessary for large-scale renewable projects is invested in local Wisconsin communities, an economic multiplier effect is created. This causes a positive ripple effect, increasing total economic output, employment, and personal income in the area.

WIND AND SOLAR PROJECTS CREATE JOBS IN WISCONSIN

In total, the clean economy employs nearly 77,000 people in Wisconsin, placing Wisconsin 13th nationally. When looking at clean tech jobs as a share of the entire state economy, Wisconsin ranks 8th on this list.[1]

More specifically, a recent study identified over 300 Wisconsin companies that contribute to the renewable energy supply chain and over 12,000 Wisconsin jobs tied directly to solar and wind power.[2]

Construction of the renewable projects themselves also create Wisconsin jobs. For example, building recent Wisconsin wind farms had the following employment effects:

Jobs Created By Wisconsin Wind Farms[3]

Project	Owner	Counties	Estimated Jobs Created (Construction)	Estimated Jobs Created (Permanent)
Glacier Hills	We Energies	Columbia	**243**	**16**
Blue Sky Green Field	We Energies	Fond du Lac	**217**	**14**
Forward	Invenergy	Fond du Lac, Dodge	**193**	**13**
Cedar Ridge	WPL	Fond du Lac	**102**	**7**
Butler Ridge	NextEra Energy	Dodge	**81**	**5**
Shirley	Duke Energy	Brown	**30**	**2**
Total			**866**	**57**

[1] "Sizing the Clean Economy: A National and Regional Green Jobs Assessment," The Brookings Institution. July 2011.
[2] "The Solar and Wind Energy Supply Chain in Wisconsin," Environmental Law & Policy Center. 2011.
[3] Data derived from RENEW Wisconsin and American Wind Energy Association. Job numbers relate solely to the construction, maintenance and operation of wind turbines, and do not include not supply-chain manufacturing such as towers for wind turbines or transportation such as delivery of turbines from Wisconsin's ports to project sites.

Due to its manufacturing infrastructure, skilled workforce, and academic support community, Wisconsin is consistently identified as a top state for job growth potential in the wind industry. As a result of these appealing factors, a 2010 U.S. Department of Energy study listed Wisconsin in the top ten for states benefitting most under a hypothetical scenario where the United States derived 20 percent of its electricity from wind power in 2030.[4]

Although some of the companies in the supply chain were not developed with the intent of specializing in products related to renewable energy, they have embraced this growing industry and adapted their business model accordingly. The clean energy market is expanding and both old-line manufacturers and entrepreneurial new firms are lining up to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the renewable energy industry.

Renewable Energy Keeps Money in Wisconsin

Unlike the cost of fossil fuels, money spent on renewable energy developed in the state stays in the state. Wind farms have become a boon to local economies, creating another source of income for farmers and adjacent landowners and providing payments to towns and counties in lieu of property taxes.

For example, in Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties these annual payments to both landowners and local governments totaled nearly $2.8 million in 2010.[5] This revenue was used to pay Fond du Lac County's bills, offsetting increases in property taxes.

Payments from WE Energies Glacier Hills project are expected to provide nearly $1,318,000 annually to Columbia County and surrounding townships in 2012.[6] Similar benefits are estimated for other units of local government, as shown in this table:

Revenue Payments to All Governments and Individuals, 2012[7]

Project	Owner	Counties	Governments	Landowners	Total
Glacier Hills	We Energies	Columbia	$648,000	$675,000	$1,318,000
Blue Sky Green Field	We Energies	Fond du Lac	$580,000	$440,000	$1,020,000
Forward	Invenergy	Fond du Lac, Dodge	$516,000	$430,000	$ 946,000
Cedar Ridge	WPL	Fond du Lac	$270,000	$205,000	$ 477,000
Butler Ridge	NextEra Energy	Dodge	$216,000	$180,000	$ 396,000
Shirley	Duke Energy	Brown	$80,000	$80,000	$ 160,000
Total			**$2,310,000**	**$2,010,000**	**$4,320,000**

[4] "20 percent Wind Energy by 2030: Increasing Wind Energy's Contribution to U.S. Electricity Supply," United States Department of Energy. July 2008.
[5] "Wind Farm Payouts Approach $3 Million," Fond du Lac Reporter. January 12, 2011. Print.
[6] "Burning Coal, Burning Cash: Wisconsin's Dependence on Imported Coal," Union of Concerned Scientists. May 2010.
[7] Data derived from RENEW Wisconsin.

Investment in Renewable Energy Projects Also Has a Multiplier Effect on The Local Economy

The multiplier effect created by capital investment in renewable energy projects also has direct, indirect and induced impacts on the Wisconsin economy. For example, the influx of $397 million, the cost of We Energies' new, 90 turbine, 162 MW, Glacier Hills wind farm, into the Wisconsin economy has far-reaching benefits. Equipment purchases, engineering and development expenses, paid wages, construction costs, and payments to landowners and local governments from the project will produce a ripple of positive economic effects far greater than the initial investment made by We Energies. When a large renewable energy project is developed, the local economy experiences a substantial and widespread boost from the investment in the form of additional purchased goods and services (such as food, clothing, and lodging).

Conclusion

Renewable energy (including wind, solar and biomass power) provides multiple employment and economic benefits for Wisconsin. These include direct and indirect jobs and consistent benefits for municipalities and landowners. It is critical that renewable energy become a key element in a diversified energy mix for the state.