



## **25-Year Return: Today's Wind Farms to Produce \$1.9B for Illinois**

Even without putting another turbine in the ground, wind farms are projected to generate \$1.9 billion in economic benefits for Illinois over the next 25 years, according to a study conducted by Illinois State University's Center for Renewable Energy.

The study examined the direct and indirect economic benefits, including jobs, tax revenues, and payments to landowners, from the 17 major wind projects totaling 1,118 MW that are online (or about to go online in the coming weeks) around the state. The study found that those 17 projects created 6,019 full-time equivalent jobs during construction periods with a total payroll of over \$306 million. They also support 292 permanent jobs in the rural parts of the state with a total annual payroll of over \$15 million. Focusing on the 17 projects already in existence, said Center for Renewable Energy Director David Loomis, allowed the study to steer clear of assumptions based on forecasts, thus making the numbers less vulnerable to being called into question.

According to the study, the projects benefit local communities by generating \$11.4 million in annual property taxes and \$4.36 million per year in extra income for Illinois landowners who lease their land to developers.

The study employed the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's latest Jobs and Economic Development Impacts economic model, also known as JEDI. (The U.S. Department of Energy, incidentally, is hosting a free Webinar on the JEDI model. For more information, go to Wind Energy News Roundup, below.)

In his remarks at a press conference announcing the release of the report, Loomis explained the range of wind farms' economic impacts, from increased activity at quarries and cement plants (for turbine foundations) to increased household spending.

One key driver of wind energy development in Illinois, the study notes, was the 2007 passage of the Illinois Power Agency Act, which included a renewable electricity standard of 25% by 2025, 75% of which is to come from wind. The study suggests that its results will be helpful in the dialogue on renewables policy going forward. Speaking to *Wind Energy Weekly*, Loomis confirmed that it has implications not only in state policy but in the federal-policy debate as well. "This study gives further evidence that a federal [renewable electricity standard] will spur job creation and economic growth," he said, pointing to the impact of Illinois's standard.

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