



Wind's Economic Numbers are Stacking Up in Wisconsin

Wisconsin is on pace to achieve its 10% renewable energy target ahead of its 2015 deadline, and along the way renewables are creating jobs, generating taxes, and protecting public health, according to a new report from Wisconsin Environment Research and Policy Center.

The report's economic numbers are particularly striking for one state. The wind energy industry invested \$400 million in Wisconsin in 2007, and more than 75 companies in the state currently participate in the regional wind energy industry. Through 2008 wind farms built in Wisconsin created an estimated 1,300 local jobs during construction and now support more than 190 long-term positions. Increasing regional demand is prompting the opening of factories in the state, such as Energy Composite Corp.'s planned wind turbine blade plant in Wisconsin Rapids that will employ 400 workers, the report notes. Wind energy is providing an extra \$1.2 million in additional income to farmers in the state, while wind farms are contributing an extra \$850,000 in tax revenues to local governments.

The state now generates more than 5% of its electricity from renewables, with local wind farms producing enough electricity to meet the needs of 130,000 typical Wisconsin homes, according to the report. Through renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, the state is preventing the emission of more than 4 million metric tons of global warming carbon dioxide, 10 million pounds of nitrogen oxide, 15 million pounds of sulfur dioxide, and at least 80 pounds of mercury.

"Wisconsin has barely scratched the surface of its clean energy resources," said the report. "The state has the potential to achieve much more."

Source: Wind Energy Weekly, 5 June 2009