

Project Summary

Project Title: Best Practices to Accelerate Wind Power in the Great Lakes Region and Beyond

Project Applicant: The Great Lakes Wind Collaborative

Principle Investigator: Victoria Pebbles, Great Lakes Commission

Topic Area 2A: Market Acceptance – Wind Powering America Activities

The Great Lakes Wind Collaborative (GLWC), a multi-sector coalition of wind energy stakeholders, proposes to impact the market for wind energy through the development and strategic dissemination of information tools on the best practices that can overcome barriers to and promote the benefits of wind development in the 8-state Great Lakes region and beyond. This project will identify ways the eight states in the region can learn from each other and establish more consistent wind siting policies and practices. Some of the Great Lakes states – such as Minnesota – have robust policy structures for their wind industries, and this information can help nascent markets develop their own more quickly.

In the Great Lakes region, there is a significant need for information that can advance wind development in complex siting scenarios – both onshore and offshore – by informing public understanding and public policy of the real costs, benefits and tradeoffs of wind. The information generated from this project will showcase benefits from wind associated with economic development, energy independence, price stability, and environmental protection (including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions), water savings and improved human health from reductions in air emissions.

Best practices information tools produced under this project will target both the general public and policymakers. An online toolbox will feature case studies and success stories of best practices, including policies and innovative approaches that minimize negative impacts and maximize environmental and economic benefits – including job creation. Multi-media information tools will be produced and disseminated to public officials and other stakeholders throughout the region. The Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN), a regional information portal for and about the Great Lakes region, will be one of the key dissemination channels for the toolbox of best practices. Other forms of dissemination will include legislative briefings and outreach to a number of key regional organizations, conducting presentations for state Wind Working Groups, and hosting strategic meetings and webinars.

Objectives

1. Identify best practices and policies for wind development in the Great Lakes region.
2. Build awareness and knowledge among all Great Lakes wind stakeholders about best practices and policy options for wind development in the Great Lakes region.
3. Build capacity among state policymakers to create policies based on an assessment of the benefits of wind power projects in the Great Lakes region.

Benefits/Outcomes

This project will ultimately result in a population that is more educated on the potential benefits wind power can offer and the means to bring it to fruition. This project will promote a more sustainable and energy-secure future for the Great Lakes region. The online toolbox of best practices and policy options produced will enable regulators and developers alike to work in a consistent and collaborative manner across the Great Lakes region in siting wind projects. These practices will have a net positive effect for both the environment and economy in the region.

Major Participants: GLWC state and other sector representatives, Great Lakes Legislative Caucus (GLLC), Midwestern Governors Association (MGA), Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA), NREL-Wind Powering America and its Wind Working Groups, and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI).