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TaiWind consortium launches green-collar manufacturing initiative

Renewable energy, industry, labour and environmental advocates ready to shape Ontario's next generation of manufacturing

Toronto – Ontario's manufacturing economy has the potential to be transformed into the world's leading builder of renewable energy generation equipment and help set the stage for a "green revolution" in our economy.

Toronto's Trillium Power Wind Corporation and several other groups announced the launch of the TaiWind Consortium to build offshore wind-power turbines and equipment in Canada. The project will hopefully be the first step in establishing a sustainable, long-term, global "green-collar" manufacturing economy, especially in light of signs of Ontario's industrial slowdown caused by the U.S. recession.

This project is the product of decades of research and nearly two years of negotiations, according to Trillium president and CEO John Kourtoff. "Fossil fuel energy supplies are either expensive, dirty or produce dangerous waste. The world is rapidly embracing renewable energy such as wind power, and especially consistent power from offshore wind, and Ontario has the offshore wind resources, facilities, work force and innovative spirit to bring it to the world. We think that TaiWind can lead the way in building the foundation of a fully integrated green-collar economy," he said.

The TaiWind Consortium is a partnership led by Trillium Power Wind Corporation and includes other offshore wind developers in the USA with several more in discussion to join. It is an ambitious initiative to build a solid economic foundation to bolster Ontario's manufacturing sector and place Canada as a leader in eco-friendly innovation. TaiWind intends to aggregate its purchase of turbines and towers as well as transmission cables, barges and other equipment and services from North American suppliers.

A recent report for the Ontario Power Authority on offshore wind submitted to the Ontario Energy Board determined that there were 64 feasible offshore wind development sites on the Ontario side of the Great Lakes that could generate 34,500 MW of power using 5MW turbines. That could provide over 60 years of renewable energy development and green-collar manufacturing employment for many thousands of Ontario workers.

"The TaiWind initiative is the largest, most ambitious renewable energy supply project in North American history," said CAW president Buzz Hargrove. "With the help of hard-working Ontarians, TaiWind will help the province, the country and the world light our houses and businesses without damaging the ecosystem while creating well-paying, sustainable jobs our workers need."

“Offshore wind power can make a huge contribution to a reliable, efficient and environmentally friendly electricity supply for Ontario, and can generate quality jobs and manufacturing opportunities here at home,” said José Etcheverry of the David Suzuki Foundation. “But to make this happen, Ontario needs to put in place the right policy framework for the electricity sector and incentives for creating jobs and manufacturing in green, low-carbon technologies.”

“TaiWind holds great promise for securing Ontario’s place in the global economy at the forefront of renewable energy development,” said Jean-François Beland speaking on behalf of Multibrid GmbH which was recently purchased by AREVA. Multibrid has begun analysis and discussions with TaiWind and other parties to develop a complete offshore wind turbine manufacturing supply-chain model for North America focused in Ontario and the entire Great Lakes region. “Neighbouring jurisdictions like New York, Michigan and Wisconsin are all pursuing ambitious wind-power agendas, and TaiWind will help position Ontario to supply North America and the western hemisphere with the needed equipment.”

One such development that TaiWind is intended to supply is Trillium Power’s proposed 750 megawatt TPW1 offshore project in Lake Ontario, approximately 20 kilometres south-east of Prince Edward County. The project will be able to power 300,000 Ontario homes and reduce carbon emissions by 3 million tonnes compared to coal generation, 1.7 million tonnes a year compared to natural gas and eliminate the consumption of 4.9 billion litres of water used for conventional power generation. It is currently awaiting approval from Ontario government officials .

Trillium Power recently finalized two ground-breaking agreements to help develop training programs for the installation and maintenance of both onshore and offshore wind-power equipment with Kingston’s St. Lawrence College as well as the First Nations Training Institute.

- 30 -

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