

EHB Real Example Week 9

Illinois | Great Lakes Wind Farm

Real Example on the siting of offshore wind turbines on Lake Michigan

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History of Great Lakes Wind Farm



Small but seemingly unstoppable, the Cleveland clean energy project 'Icebreaker Wind' fought for 14 years to become the first offshore wind farm on the Great Lakes.

- Icebreaker Wind secured a **\$50 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy** and won a case before the Ohio Supreme Court
- While financing was the largest issues, other obstacles included **advancing age, relatively small size and lack of state support**
- The fall of Icebreaker was a blow for those who dream of clean energy flowing in from the Great Lakes, which have the **potential to supply electricity to millions of homes**

“We just don’t have a path forward right now,”

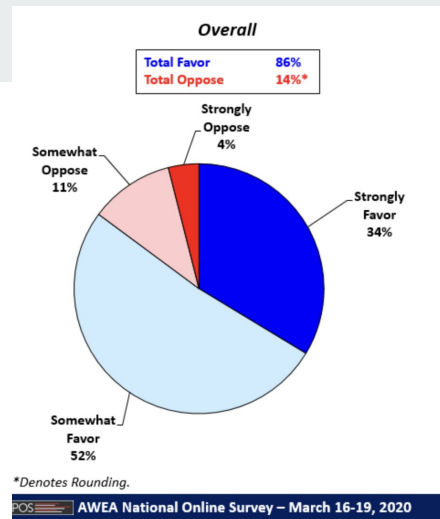
William Friedman

Board member at the nonprofit behind Icebreaker, the Lake Erie Energy Development Corp.

The Illinois Plan: Channeling the Windy City

The Illinois wind farm was proposed in February, 2023 on Lake Michigan in a bill that notes the potential benefits of a Chicago location

- This farm will be larger than Icebreaker and could benefit from **strong state support for clean energy**
- Residents of the Great Lakes Basin support **increasing the use offshore (80%) wind power** which echoes the national sentiment
- They believe such technologies bring more good than harm including **economic benefits and revenue for land owners (79%) and limit climate change (58%)**
- The Illinois project would look to produce 150 megawatts of energy while the Ohio project will produce just 20 megawatts



“Chicago probably could lead the way, and in some ways is leading the way” in the race to build the first Great Lakes wind farm”

Walt Musial, Chief engineer for offshore wind energy at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory



Behavioral Strength

- **High Familiarity and Concrete Idea:** Offshores wind farms have been successfully tested in different contexts to reaffirm public beliefs
- **Lack of Physical Proximity:** The distance from the turbines make them very attractive as it resolves the NIMBYism issue around many new technologies. They also reduce personal risk perception as with the distance the severity of personal damage is low
- **State support for clean energy:** Illinois has a clear stance on clear energy which provides the Democratic party support to the project, a major strength which was missing in Cleveland
- **Salient benefits to public:** The bill has publicly highlighted the benefits for different stakeholders especially labor leaders who would get an influx of clear energy jobs.

Behavioral Weakness

- **Affect heuristic:** Despite the large distance, communities that value the coastlines for their natural beauty might raise issues. The program states that the turbines will be situated 15 miles or more from land and will less likely interfere with scenic views but people might still feel the difference everytime they go by the lake shore
- **High perceived costs:** The perceived costs are quite high not just for maintaining these huge structures, especially in cases of collision with sheets of ice in the lake but also extending to negative environmental impact on migratory birds and sea life
- **Unfair Distribution of Benefits:** Leasing wind areas to developers would also violate the doctrine that the lakes are to be held in trust by the states for public use, building the public perspective that distribution of benefits is not fair.





Thank You

Sources:

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