WIND'S BENEFITS TOUTED

Energy farm could create jobs, revenues, Clemson study says

Staff reports

A wind farm off South Carolina's coast could generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in wages and state and local government revenues, a new Clemson University study says.

The extent of South Carolina's wind-energy industry in 2012 was detailed in a report by Clemson University's Restoration Institute and Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

The study also illustrates how the state's financial landscape could look after development of an offshore wind farm.

Called South Carolina Wind Energy Supply Chain Survey and Offshore Wind Economic Impact Study, the research prepared for the South Carolina Energy Office shows that a 1,000-megawatt offshore wind farm constructed between 2016 and 2025 would create an average of more than 3,800 jobs per year throughout the 10-year construction period.

The study also says it would generate nearly $2 billion in wages and nearly $620 million in combined state and local government revenue.

While South Carolina currently has no utility-scale offshore wind-energy generation capacity, the state already plays an important role in the nation's wind-energy supply chain, according to Ashlie Lancaster, director of the South Carolina Energy Office.

Development of such an industry would bolster the state's position nationally and internationally, Lancaster said.

"Not only would an offshore wind industry help diversify South Carolina's energy sources, it also would have the potential to generate thousands of long-term jobs and create a sustainable industry that could become the envy of the nation," she said.

The South Carolina Wind Industry census states 33 firms that responded to the survey reported a total of 1,134 employees spend part or all of their time on wind energy-related produc-

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tion or services. These employees represent about 14 percent of total employment at the firms.

Survey respondents reported South Carolina wind-energy employees in management, professional, scientific and technical jobs made an average of $78,308 per year, which is slightly above the state's average annual salary for those types of jobs of $62,406.

State Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt said the state needs to look to industry and research collaborations to fill the needs of the marketplace and keep the state competitive.

"Commerce supports ongoing research and development that will help further our state's portfolio of alternative and sustainable energy, including wind," Hitt said. "These industries can help fill the pipeline with high-skilled, high-paying jobs."

Work force development is an important component of Clemson's role in development of an offshore wind industry, said John Kelly, vice president for economic development.

Through collaboration with private industry, and certificate and advanced-degree programs, Clemson will help train the state's future workers, Kelly said.

"Part of Clemson's role in our growing wind industry will be to provide a talent pool that allows our companies to innovate and be competitive in the marketplace," Kelly said.