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## **Developers around the world are buzzing about New York's plan for Great Lakes wind farms, NYPA head says**

**By Marie Morelli / The Post-Standard**

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The New York State Power Authority is proposing to locate wind turbines offshore in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

Syracuse, NY -- The New York Power Authority's plan for offshore wind turbines in the Great Lakes is drawing "huge interest" from developers all over the world, the head of the authority said Thursday.

NYPA is seeking proposals for 100 or more windmills in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario to generate up to 500 megawatts of electricity. Advantages will go to bidders who agree to manufacture windmill parts in Upstate New York.

"It's not just a renewable energy project," Richard Kessel, president and chief executive officer of the power authority, said Thursday in a meeting of The Post-Standard's editorial board. "It's a job creator. It could make New York state the center for manufacturing of offshore wind components if we get in there right away."

A Great Lakes wind farm could be the first in North America, unless Cape Wind beats it to the punch. A decision on whether the 420-megawatt project off Cape Cod can go forward is due by April.

Responses to the power authority's request for proposals are due June 1. "We will select a developer by the

end of the year," Kessel declared.

Offshore wind faces three broad challenges, he said: economics, construction in the water, and aesthetics. The third — how the wind turbines look — is the most difficult to overcome, Kessel said.

Opposition to wind development is building in communities bordering Lake Ontario, from Galloo Island to Cape Vincent to the Thousand Islands. Some residents feel the North Country is becoming a giant wind factory, to the detriment of tourism and wildlife.

"There's enough area in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario to put this away from people who don't want it," Kessel said. "If people don't want it in their area, they're not going to get it."

While in Syracuse Thursday, Kessel met with the Manufacturers Association of Central New York to discuss Power for Jobs, the state program through NYPA that reduces electricity rates for manufacturers.

Randall Wolken, president of MACNY, said they agreed the program should be authorized for a longer term, instead of annually, so that businesses can plan ahead. They also want the Legislature to allow new companies to take power allocations given up by companies that left the state or went out of business.

"A significant number of companies would like to . . . get into the program," Wolken said. "We do know there's a need."

Kessel said companies that get a power subsidy in exchange for keeping or creating jobs should not be expected to keep those promises in this difficult economy.

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