

# Chinese wind energy firms to make components in U.S.

PITTSBURGH (PAI) — United Steelworkers has convinced two big Chinese wind energy companies to establish supply chains in the United States to make wind energy components for the firms' planned wind farms here, union officials said.

Steelworkers President Leo Gerard said the pact means creation of at least 500 to 1,000 high-paying factory jobs making the estimated 8,000 components in each 250-ton tower generating electricity on a wind farm.

"Our objective is to get to 100 percent domestic sourcing" of the wind farm components," Gerard said. "Right now, it's at 50 to 60 percent."

The memorandum of understanding between the union and A Power and Shenyang Power says that the firms will build wind farms here, with U.S.-made components, "wherever feasible."

Components include wind farm towers, blades and cement footings. The Steelworkers Union represents workers in all those industries. As part of the memorandum, the Chinese "made clear they would not oppose" any Steelworker organizing drive

among the workers in the wind farm supply chain plants, Gerard said. "This is an understanding we have with several other employers," he noted.

The sites for the wind farms and for the supply chain factories have yet to be selected, but the union said one will be in Nevada. Others will be close to sources of materials, such as the steel for the wind farm turbines.

No overall cost estimates were given for the planned wind farms or their supply chain factories, but Gerard said the two Chinese companies have already committed to spend \$90 million to buy land for the wind farms.

"You want to use this model for U.S.-Chinese economic development," Gerard said.

A Chinese-sponsored wind farm in the Texas high plains, since scrapped, would have cost \$463 million. Unions, led by IBEW, derailed that project when they revealed the farm would be using stimulus dollars for the construction but that its components would be made in China and employing 2,000 people there. The components would have shipped to Texas for assembly only, creating 300 jobs.



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## ...Pelosi touts Portland retrofit program

(From Page 1)

Ana Gonzalez, hired by Neil Kelly in late-July, was front-and-center at the Pelosi press event as an example of someone who found work thanks to the program, which got a \$1.1 million initial grant from stimulus funds. Gonzalez, 41, worked six years in quality assurance at Adidas, then got a job at a domestic violence non-profit. After referring women clients to Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., Gonzalez decided a job in the building trades would be a good career move for her too. She went through the group's seven-week pre-apprenticeship program for women, and found work at Neil Kelly. Now she's a member of Carpenters Local 247, earning \$15.85 an hour in the union's new weatherization technician classification. She will also have full-family health coverage once she logs 250 hours on the job, thanks to a \$6.44-an-hour employer contribution to the union health and welfare trust.

Neil Kelly's new Home Performance division has seven employees: three new hires including Gonzalez, and four who transferred from the company's other divisions. That's in a home remodeling company that shrunk from 165 to 130 in the recession. Neil Kelly's home performance division works exclusively with Clean Energy Works, and is doing about 60 of the 500 homes in the program's first stage. It's the company's only growth spot right now, company president Tom Kelly told Pelosi.

Program-wide, Clean Energy Works Portland reports just 16 new jobs created a year into the program — 11 in the private sector and five for the program itself.

Yet, Mayor Adams told Pelosi Clean Energy Works will be responsible for

1,300 jobs in the next three years as it rolls out statewide, thanks to a second stimulus grant of \$20 million.

Clean Energy Works Portland director Andria Jacob explained the 1,300 jobs figure to the Labor Press. It uses a U.S. Department of Energy economic model which estimates a job is created for every \$92,000 spent; and it assumes the program will meet a requirement that it find a five-to-one funding match for the stimulus funds.

Pelosi's staff also wanted to make a point that the stimulus-funded project would employ not just the workers doing the retrofit, but the workers manufacturing the equipment and supplies they installed. But Clean Energy Works is too small to meet the threshold triggering the Recovery Act's "Buy America" provision. Adams obliged, announcing an "emerging" supplier strategy that he said would make sure the program favors American-made goods.

Contractors taking part in Clean Energy Works Portland hadn't heard anything from the City about a preference for U.S.-made supplies. At the Ficht's, the insulation and furnace were made in America, but the tankless water heater is Japanese.

Jacob, the program director, said Adams' comment referred to a staff-person at Portland Development Commission who is developing a domestic and local content proposal.

While there was no national media at the Pelosi press event, it did get local coverage. In the Ficht's living room, a freelance TV cameraman hit Pelosi with one of the three questions Fox News ed-

itors had given him to ask: "What do you say to critics who argue that this is just a payoff to the unions before the election?"

"How can people be opposed to this?" Pelosi replied. "It doesn't make sense. They say it's going to add to the deficit. Where were they during the Bush Administration when the biggest growth in debt was created?"

If local green job results appear modest, it's worth noting that in a \$3.5 trillion federal budget, the \$1.1 million and \$20 million grants to Clean Energy Works are pretty modest sums. And those are one-time stimulus act grants. Asked by the Labor Press about future federal funding for the program, Pelosi and Blumenauer said only that Congress is instead discussing home energy tax credits and rebates, the cost of which would be offset by ending some oil companies' tax breaks.

"It's not about government spending," Pelosi said. "It's about government investing to stimulate the private sector to take the lead."

For Tom Kelly, seeing this work come and go with government policy would be an unfortunate bit of déjà vu.

"Back in the '70s, in the Jimmy Carter era, our company had a division with 30 employees putting in insulation, putting in solar hot water heaters, doing storm windows in people's houses," Kelly told Pelosi. "In those days we called it weatherization. Now we use words like 'energy retrofit.'" But the programs went away, Kelly said, and the industry dried up, when Ronald Reagan swept into the White House.

# Local Motion

July 2010

Union certifications and decertifications in Oregon and Southwest Washington, as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board

## Recognition elections

Name of employer	Date	Name of union	Location	Results:	
				Union Yes	Union No
Boeing (simulator technicians)	7/19	IAM-WW Dist. Lodge 1	Klamath Falls	4	0

## Recognition by card check

Name of employer	Date	Name of union	Location	Number of employees
Deschutes County District Attorney's Office	7/15	Deschutes County District Attorneys Association	Bend	17

## Requests for recognition election

Name of employer	Name of union	Location	Number of employees
Hickory Springs Manufacturing Company	Machinists District Lodge 24	Portland	31
Akzo Nobel Coatings	Teamsters Local 324	Salem	36
Samaritan Dialysis Services	Service Employees International Union Local 49	Corvallis	27
Fred Meyer Jewelers	United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555	Hillsboro	5