Three Northeast Ohio offshore wind power projects secure federal money

By SCOTT SUTTELL
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Three Northeast Ohio offshore wind power projects are among 41 nationwide that have received money from the federal government.

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu today announced the distribution of $43 million in grants over the next five years to "speed technical innovations, lower costs, and shorten the timeline for deploying offshore wind energy systems."

The 41 projects are in 20 states and "will advance wind turbine design tools and hardware, improve information about U.S. offshore wind resources, and accelerate the deployment of offshore wind by reducing market barriers such as supply chain development, transmission and infrastructure," according to the Department of Energy.

The three Northeast Ohio recipients are as follows:

- **Freshwater Wind LLC** in Cleveland received $500,000 for a project that will "develop a computational model to study how existing wind turbine systems could be optimized for shallow water conditions found in the Great Lakes."

  Freshwater Wind is a private developer selected by Lake Erie Energy Development Corp. (LEEDCo) for an initial 20- to 30-megawatt offshore wind project in Lake Erie.

  "This grant is a seed toward starting a new industry. While we understand that a core challenge is lowering costs, it can be done," said Lorry Wagner, president of LEEDCo, in a statement.

  "All things considered, our learning curve will be much smaller compared to that seen in Europe — an industry now employing more than 40,000," Dr. Wagner said. "This is one reason why LEEDCo is starting small. After the initial project, cost reduction will be driven by economies of scale and research from grants like this."

- **Nautica Windpower LLC** in Olmsted Falls also received $500,000. The Department of Energy said Nautica Windpower's project "will develop a conceptual design for a deep water offshore wind farm using lightweight floating platforms with improved access for maintenance."

- **Case Western Reserve University** in Cleveland received $540,000. Its project "will evaluate potential impacts of offshore wind on the electric grid in the Great Lakes region and determine requirements on interconnection points, control systems, and the application of system reinforcements for different transmission system characteristics."