Clean Energy States Alliance
ITAC, LLC

INTERSTATE TURBINE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Interstate Turbine Advisory Council (ITAC) is an alliance of clean energy programs and utility incentive providers working jointly to tackle the challenges and promote the potential of distributed wind. ITAC has four areas of collaborative focus: information sharing, research and learning, industry communication, and equipment evaluation.

A *unified* list of eligible wind turbines

A primary product of the ITAC collaboration is a unified list of small and mid-sized wind turbines that meet the performance, reliability, acoustic and warranty service expectations of incentive providers. This creation of this list is a critical step in the evolution of the distributed wind market. Ultimately, the list can be used by ITAC member utilities and clean energy programs to qualify eligible wind power projects for incentives.

ITAC's Mission

- To establish a collaborative group of public clean energy programs to evaluate and identify small and mid-sized wind turbines that fit the performance and durability expectations of incentive providers.
- Take advantage of the research and collective expertise with wind energy systems of the participating organizations.
- To pool resources to efficiently engage qualified experts to assist with technical review.
- To create a unified list of wind energy turbines that would potentially be eligible for participating state incentive programs.

Background

Currently, several public clean energy programs, including those in New York, Wisconsin, Oregon, California and others, maintain lists of wind turbines that are eligible for funding through their distributed wind energy incentive programs. The purpose of these lists is to ensure that rate- or taxpayer funding is supporting the installation of technology with a demonstrated record of durability, safety, and warranty service, as well as reasonable acoustic and performance characteristics.

Collaboration in Action

Information sharing

In addition to an active listserv, ITAC hosts regular meetings and webinars to share information and discuss topics of mutual interest, such as program design, performance data, customer and project concerns, and effective incentive policy. Members learn from one another and are better equipped to make informed policy, program design, and implementation decisions.

Research and joint learning

ITAC engages industry experts from universities, federal agencies, and private industry to educate members. Recently, ITAC has been briefed on subjects including: turbine testing procedures and standards; domestic and international certification; technical wind turbine design; mid-scale wind turbine standards; and new tools for site assessment.

Industry communication

ITAC provides a central clearinghouse for wind industry stakeholders to engage with state clean energy programs. Furthermore, many energy programs are too small to have much influence in the marketplace, or induce manufacturers to address issues of concern. As a group, utility incentive providers and clean energy programs can be a much more powerful force.

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Having individual, differing state lists of eligible wind turbines creates confusion in the marketplace. It's also inefficient. In several cases, the review processes used by the programs have failed to screen out unsuitable wind turbines. All of these reasons make managing state or program-level lists challenging.

Due to the relatively small number of incentive-supported wind systems installed in any given state, it is vital for states to collaborate and share intelligence about past and present product performance, customer and dealer experiences and program challenges.

By collaborating and pooling resources, clean energy programs can cost-effectively engage qualified experts to assist with technical review. Combining the collective experience and data of programs across the country provides additional critical information for the evaluation process. The end result is a stronger, more effective list of qualified wind turbines.

Participation

Clean energy programs, utilities and other wind incentive providers are invited to participate in ITAC. Members of ITAC are authorized to use the ITAC list of wind turbines as the basis for incentive eligibility. In addition, members may participate in regular information-sharing calls and webinars, engage in the listserv, have access to the rapidly growing library of wind turbine and manufacturer information.

ITAC is a self-funded enterprise. As a result, members must contribute to the costs of administering the organization and engaging technical consultants to assist with wind turbine evaluation.* ITAC has two tiers of participation:

TIER 2

- Authorized use of the ITAC turbine list
- Participation in information-sharing calls & listserv
- Access to notes and decision justifications for turbines that have been reviewed
- Access to manufacturer data and reports

TIER 1

- All Tier 2 benefits
- Full advisory council member with participation in consensus decisions on wind turbine criteria & selection
- Access to full turbines analysis from technical assistance contractors
- Access to confidential data and reports from manufacturers
- Prominent logo placement on the website as a council member

Contact

Contact ITAC Administrator Val Stori for more information. She can be reached at val@cleanegroup.org or 802.223.2554.

ITAC & Certification

Certification is a critical step to increase consumer confidence in small wind technology and provide the consistency that public clean energy programs are seeking. However, many incentive programs are looking to go beyond certification in evaluating turbines.

Certification verifies and reports the engineering, acoustic, and power performance characteristics of a wind turbine. It does not examine the operational history, consumer and dealer experiences with the manufacturer, or the duration and quality of the warranty. Any of these elements may have great bearing on a system's suitability for funding through clean energy programs.

Another challenge for clean energy programs is the limitations of the current American standard for small wind turbines. That standard, AWEA 9.1-2009, only applies to a part of the small wind market. For turbines with rotor swept areas greater than 200 m^2, there is no appropriate or reasonable standard to apply.

Many clean energy programs are keen to support projects of this size. Mid-sized turbines tend to have better overall performance and require a lower dollar per MW investment from funders. This makes them an important piece of a cost-effective wind program's portfolio. However, due to their large capacity, they are usually eligible for large incentives reaching into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. With this comes an even greater need for scrutiny to ensure the systems will operate reliably for their full life expectancy.

For all these reasons, ITAC was created to facilitate a more efficient and effective evaluation process that can build on existing certification schemes. By pooling resources and expertise from multiple states, ITAC can support certification and strengthen the market for small and midsized wind turbines.

* Participation costs are based on an estimated operating budget and anticipated number of participating energy programs. Contact Val Stori for more information.