Small Wind Innovation Zones

This Act directs the state utilities division to establish and administer a small wind innovation zone program to optimize local, regional, and state benefits from wind energy and to facilitate and expedite interconnection of small wind energy systems with electric utilities throughout the state. “Small wind innovation zone” means a political subdivision of the state, including but not limited to a city, county, township, school district, community college, area education agency, institution under the control of the state board of regents, a local commission, or small wind energy system owners who agree to certain terms.

The Act directs the state chapters of the National League of Cities and National Association of Counties to develop a model ordinance with the state wind energy association and representatives from the utility industry that political subdivisions in the state can use to establish small wind innovation zones. The legislation also directs the state utilities board to create a model interconnection agreement that owners of small wind energy systems can use to connect to energy utilities.

Submitted as:
Iowa
House File 810 – Enrolled
Status: Enacted into law in 2009.

Suggested State Legislation

(Title, enacting clause, etc.)

Section 1. [Short Title.] This Act shall be cited as “An Act Providing for the Establishment of Small Wind Innovation Zones.”

Section 2. [Definitions.] As used in this Act:

(1) “Electric utility” means a public utility that furnishes electricity to the public for compensation and which enters into a model interconnection agreement with the owner of a small wind energy system as provided in Section 5 of this Act.

(2) “Small wind energy system” means a wind energy conversion system that collects and converts wind into energy to generate electricity which has a nameplate generating capacity of [one hundred kilowatts] or less.

(3) “Small wind innovation zone” means a political subdivision of this state, including but not limited to a [city, county, township, school district, community college, area education agency, institution under the control of the state board of regents, or any other local commission, association, or tribal council] which adopts, or is encompassed within a local government which adopts the [model ordinance] as provided in Section 4 of this Act.

Section 3. [Model Ordinance to Establish a Small Wind Innovation Zone.] The state [league of cities], the [association of counties], the [environmental council], [wind energy association], and representatives from the utility industry shall consult and develop a [model ordinance] to be offered on both the state [league of cities’] and the state [association of counties’] Internet sites and made available for use by a local government which constitutes or encompasses a political subdivision that is applying for designation as a Small Wind Innovation Zone. A local government adopting the [model ordinance] shall establish an expedited approval
process with regard to small wind energy systems in compliance with the [ordinance] in order to qualify as a Small Wind Innovation Zone.

Section 4. [Model Interconnection Agreement.] The utilities board shall develop a [Model Interconnection Agreement] by [insert date], for utilization within a small wind innovation zone by the owner of a small wind energy system seeking to interconnect with an electric utility. The [interconnection agreement] shall ensure that the energy produced can be safely interconnected with the utility without causing any adverse or unsafe consequences and is consistent with the electric utility's resource needs. The [board] shall establish by rule procedures for modification of the [Model Interconnection Agreement] upon mutually agreeable terms and conditions in unique or unusual circumstances, subject to [board] approval. Electric utilities shall consider adopting the [Model Interconnection Agreement].

Section 5. [Small Wind Innovation Zone Program.]
(A) The utilities division shall establish and administer a Small Wind Innovation Zone Program to optimize local, regional, and state benefits from wind energy and to facilitate and expedite interconnection of small wind energy systems with electric utilities throughout this state. Pursuant to the program, the owner of a small wind energy system located within a small wind innovation zone desiring to interconnect with an electric utility shall benefit from a streamlined application process, can qualify under a [model ordinance], and may use a [model interconnection agreement].

(B) A political subdivision seeking to be designated a Small Wind Innovation Zone shall apply to the [division] upon a form developed by the [division]. The [division] shall approve an application which documents that the applicable local government has adopted the model ordinance developed under Section 3 of this Act or is in the process of amending an existing zoning ordinance to comply with the [model ordinance] developed under Section 3 of this Act and that an electric utility operating within the political subdivision has agreed to utilize the [model interconnection agreement] developed under Section 4 of this Act to contract with the small wind energy system owners who agree to its terms.

Section 6. [Tax Credit Incentives.] The owner of a small wind energy system operating within a Small Wind Innovation Zone shall qualify for a renewable energy tax credit pursuant to [insert citation].

Section 7. [Reporting Requirements.] The [division] shall prepare a report summarizing the number of applications received from political subdivisions seeking to be designated a Small Wind Innovation Zone, the number of applications granted, the number of small wind energy systems generating electricity within each Small Wind Innovation Zone, and the amount of wind energy produced, and shall submit the report to the members of the [general assembly] [annually] by [January 1].