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Jobs Question Jeopardizes Wind Farm's Stimulus Deal

By TOM ZELLER Jr. and [KEITH BRADSHER](#)

News that \$450 million in federal stimulus money might go toward installing Chinese-made [wind turbines](#) in Texas prompted criticism on Thursday, with Senator [Charles E. Schumer](#), Democrat of New York, calling on the Obama administration to deny federal financing.

According to partners in the deal, the proposed 600-megawatt wind farm, announced late last week, would be built on 36,000 acres in West Texas using 240 wind turbines manufactured by A-Power Energy Generation Systems of Shenyang, China.

Partners in the \$1.5 billion deal said that while most of the financing would come from unnamed Chinese banks, they would seek about one-third of the project's cost — \$450 million — from money set aside in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the huge stimulus bill that passed earlier this year.

But that stimulus money, Mr. Schumer said, "is supposed to create jobs in America."

The Texas project — a joint venture between the American [private equity](#) firm U.S. Renewable Energy Group, Cielo Wind Power and A-Power Energy — would create about 300 construction and operational jobs in Texas, according to the partners, but substantially more manufacturing jobs in China.

Mr. Schumer pointed to a recent analysis by the Investigative Reporting Workshop, a nonprofit journalism project at American University, which found that 84 percent of the \$1.05 billion in "green" stimulus funding distributed since September had gone to foreign companies building renewable energy projects in the United States — mostly wind projects.

In a letter he sent to Energy Secretary [Steven Chu](#), the senator urged Mr. Chu to “reject any request for stimulus money unless the high-value components, including the wind turbines, are manufactured in the United States.”

But Walt Hornaday, the president of Cielo Wind Power, which is based in Austin and is the largest independently owned wind power developer in the United States, said in a statement that the project would need stimulus money to move forward, and that it was vital to “engineers, contractors and suppliers who will see millions of dollars of work at a time when energy-based jobs are difficult to find.”

China has vexed multinational corporations and American officials by blocking access by foreign companies to its own growing renewable energy market, though the country did ease its local-content requirements for wind turbines in talks with American officials last week.

The Energy Department noted in a statement that money for this type of project was provided as a tax credit, giving the agency little discretion. Stephanie Mueller, a spokeswoman, said that “if a taxpayer meets the eligibility requirements, they receive the tax credit.”

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