



CHICAGO AREA
DEVELOPERS



February 10, 2024

To: The Illinois Power Agency

From: Jay Rowell, Executive Director, HIRE360

As the Executive Director of HIRE360, I'm writing to express HIRE360's support for HB 2132, which would allow for an offshore wind pilot project in Lake Michigan.

Offshore wind offers tremendous potential to create much-need employment opportunities, including thousands of union jobs. HIRE360 is eager to make sure these jobs are filled by people who have historically been left out of large-scale economic development projects, primarily women and minorities.

HIRE360 is an industry-led not-for-profit whose mission is to develop untapped talent in under-represented communities through workforce and business development to meet the generational shift occurring across the construction and building trades.

We house four pillars of programming: industry-focused pre-apprenticeship training for more than 35 trades; women- and minority-owned business development for access to capital and capacity-building; youth outreach, and a supply chain diversity program to advance a more level playing field among the industry's women- and minority-owned suppliers of goods and services.

HIRE360 assists more than 1,000 aspiring apprentices yearly with pre-apprenticeship training and support. Our team provides career guidance, skills assessments, test prep, site tours, even direct financial assistance to cover costs otherwise unaffordable for our candidates to become building trades apprentices. We emphasize 1:1 individualized support through a relationship-based case management model.

HIRE360 prepares today's and tomorrow's apprentices for trades critical to utility-scale wind projects. Our candidates will become: ironworkers who fabricate and erect the steel towers that support the turbines, heavy equipment operators who run cranes and other machinery to lift and maneuver turbine components, cement masons who build the concrete foundations for turbines, electricians who install and connect the electrical wiring and systems within turbines and across wind farms, welders who join metal components during construction and repairs, and carpenters who will build access platforms and other structures.



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HIRE360 fulfills its mission when qualified, committed residents of historically disinvested communities can access the trades that lead to family-supporting jobs, with benefits and the promise of a fulfilling career. This year, we'll fulfill our mission with a multi-year contract through the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, where we will launch a network of pre-apprenticeship programs across Central and Southern Illinois.

Offshore wind projects like those envisioned for Illinois in HB 2132 are essential to our work because of the potential that wind holds for workforce equity and inclusion.

