



## PRESS RELEASE

December 20, 2021

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### **NJEDA/GCIT AGREEMENT WILL EXPAND JOB TRAINING PROGRAM TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR CAREERS IN OFFSHORE WIND COMPONENT MANUFACTURING**

Trenton, N.J. (December 20, 2021) – The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) and the Gloucester County Institute of Technology (GCIT) today announced plans to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support the expansion of the GCIT’s welding and painting programs. Through the MOU, the NJEDA will provide up to \$75,000 for programs that prepare students and workers for jobs in heavy steel offshore wind component manufacturing. Supported by funding from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU), this MOU is aligned with the creation of the Wind Institute which will accelerate offshore wind workforce development and innovation in New Jersey.

“Job creation in the high-growth offshore wind industry has been a priority for Governor Phil Murphy and cultivating a pipeline of skilled workers is vital to achieving that goal,” said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan. “This MOU is latest in a series of bold steps the NJEDA is taking to establish New Jersey as a hub for offshore wind manufacturing.”

“Investing in the future of the offshore wind industry is just as important as investing in the education to create skilled employees,” said Senate President Steve Sweeney. “The partnership with NJEDA allows the school to tailor their program to fit the skills necessary to work in this industry. The goal is to educate our students so they can find employment at Paulsboro Marine Terminal, located only 20 minutes from their high school.”

GCIT, a four-year vocational-technical public high school in Sewell, New Jersey is collaborating with EEW American Offshore Structures (EEW), a leading manufacturer of offshore wind monopile foundations, to expand and tailor its welding and painting programs. GCIT students will learn the specific job skills required by EEW and other large scale offshore wind turbine component manufacturers.

In December 2020, EEW announced a \$250 million investment in a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility to build steel components, known as monopiles. These monopile will be used as foundations for offshore wind turbines across the Eastern Seaboard. The facility, which is located at the Paulsboro Marine Terminal in Gloucester County, is the largest industrial offshore wind investment in the United States to date. Construction on the facility broke ground earlier this year and hiring of specialized welders and painters will begin by the end of next year.

“Gloucester County is a leader in job innovation and prioritizes creating opportunity for individuals to learn the skills necessary to excel in their future careers,” said Robert M. Damming, Director of the Gloucester County Board of Commissioners. “Strong partnerships between the County, GCIT, Rowan College of South Jersey and Rowan University is the reason Gloucester County is the fastest growing county in New Jersey and will continue to add talented, hard-working and successful applicants into the career pool.”

“MOUs provide critical access to funding and opportunity which allows programs like GCIT’s to create incredible future employees,” said Commissioner Lyman Barnes, Gloucester County Liaison to the Department of Education. “Our welding and painting programs at GCIT were already impressive, but this will create another level of professional enhancement for our students.”

“We are excited to enter into this partnership and look forward to providing this training to current and future secondary and post-secondary students,” said GCIT Superintendent Michael C. Dicken. “This MOU, coupled with our centralized location near the Port of Paulsboro, will enable us to

enhance our partnership with Rowan College of South Jersey, Rowan University, and other vocational technical schools in our region to build capacity and develop programs related to the wind sector.”

EEW anticipates hiring hundreds of workers for the project, the majority of which will be welders and painters. Job skills learned through the expansion of GCIT’s welding and painting programs will position GCIT graduates as attractive candidates for jobs at the Paulsboro Marine Terminal as well as other large scale component manufacturing facilities as the industry grows in New Jersey.

“Workforce development and skills training are critical, as we look to staff our new offshore wind factory in Paulsboro,” EEW CEO Lee Laurendeau said. “The collaboration with industry, education and government is necessary to realize the hundreds of clean energy manufacturing jobs in South Jersey. EEW would like to thank their partners, knowing that this is the beginning of an entirely new industry being brought to the State of New Jersey.”

EEW and GCIT have already made commitments to support the expansion of these programs, including securing donated welding equipment from welding manufacturer Lincoln Electric that will be used in production. Welding for these offshore wind tower foundations occurs onshore in fabrication facilities using specialized machines and welding consumables. To support these technical needs of this project, Lincoln Electric will also be conducting a “Train the Trainer” program for GCIT and other regional vocational school welding instructors focused on the primary welding processes and materials used in production. The training program offered will focus on theory and will provide hands-on experience using Lincoln Electric’s equipment and welding consumables used to weld these large foundations together. This training program will expose local students to the technology necessary to be productive employees in the offshore wind industry.

The NJEDA’s financial support will help GCIT secure additional specialized equipment and materials, fund instructor time for additional evening/weekend classes that will train adults, and market and promote these programs to attract a diverse array of participants.

Congressman Donald Norcross, who has been a strong proponent of New Jersey’s burgeoning offshore wind industry, welcomed the news of the MOU and applauded the impact it will have on the South Jersey’s economy.

“The offshore wind industry will provide long-term, family-sustaining careers for a new generation of workers in South Jersey,” Congressman Norcross said. “As the product of a registered apprenticeship, I know firsthand how valuable these educational opportunities are. This partnership will fill a demand for highly-skilled welders and painters in the offshore wind industry, which is quickly establishing itself as a powerful force for economic growth in South Jersey. This is another example of how renewable energy and jobs go hand-in-hand.”

Paulsboro Mayor Gary Stevenson echoed Congressman Norcross’s sentiments and noted that positive impact the expansion of GCIT’s welding and painting programs will have on Paulsboro residents.

“As Mayor of Paulsboro, and on behalf of the governing officials and our residents, we are very excited to hear about the progress being made on the beginning of the process to hire and train people, especially local residents, to work at the Port of Paulsboro,” Mayor Stevenson said. “There is much anticipation throughout on hearing the news. This is a huge step in getting folks good paying jobs, and hopefully buying homes and living in Paulsboro. This will have a huge POSITIVE impact on which our community and other local business’s will benefit greatly. This day has been a long time coming and we stand ready to assist in any way. I look forward to working with EEW, NJEDA, & GCIT officials in their efforts to begin the process of hiring and training of workers.”

These efforts complement awards earlier this year by the NJEDA to Rowan College of South Jersey to establish an offshore wind turbine technician training program and to Atlantic Cape Community College to establish an industry-recognized Global Wind Organization (GWO) safety training program and facility. The GWO facility will prepare New Jersey workers for jobs in the state’s growing offshore wind industry. Like the MOU announced today, these initiatives were funded by the NJBPU.

“New Jersey is emerging as a leader in offshore wind supply chain thanks to both the leadership of Governor Murphy and the collective efforts of industry leaders and other stakeholders working to put the Garden State at the forefront of this vital sector,” said NJBPU President Joseph L. Fiordaliso. “Funding critical programs such as the one GCIT is creating strengthens our ability to ensure New Jerseyans have the tools they need compete for the jobs of tomorrow.”

#### **About the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the State’s principal agency for driving economic growth. The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a

stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey's long-term economic competitiveness.

### About GCIT

The Gloucester County Institute of Technology (GCIT) offers educational opportunities for Gloucester County high school students with a focus on becoming college and career ready. The school is a full-time, four-year comprehensive high school. The programs afford students a well-rounded experience with a full complement of extracurricular activities and athletics.

To learn more about NJEDA resources for businesses call NJEDA Customer Care at 609-858-6767 or visit <https://www.njeda.gov> and follow @NewJerseyEDA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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