



University Announces Massive Wind Power Purchase

15-year buy is a key part of BU's Climate Action Plan

BOSTON UNIVERSITY WILL BUY NONPOL-
luting wind power for 15 years beginning
in 2020, a major step in the University's
Climate Action Plan (CAP) to curb greenhouse
gas emissions.

BU will buy the power from a South Dakota wind farm that will begin construction in the spring. It will then resell that power for use in the midwestern United States. By purchasing power outside New England, the University will earn legal credits (called renewable energy certificates) against its own carbon emissions in Boston. Renewable energy certificates are documents under US law certifying that energy buyers have purchased clean power. Such credits, along with increasing energy efficiency, renewable sources, and the ongoing greening of the New England power grid, are key strategies in the CAP, which aims to reduce carbon emissions to zero on BU's campuses and global operations by 2040.

President Robert A. Brown announced the Power Purchase Agreement with ENGIE North America on September 18 at a forum with Boston's largest building-space owners. Many of the 50 owners, BU among them, have committed to mitigating their contributions to climate change. They met at the Rajen Kilachand Center for Integrated Life Sciences & Engineering at an event BU cohosted with the Boston Green Ribbon Commission and A Better City.

As part of its contract with ENGIE, BU will also receive educational and research opportunities for

A Midwest wind farm similar to this one will get essential investment from BU as part of the University's Climate Action Plan.

faculty and students. Those include two ENGIE summer internships for academically high-performing students who want to learn about wind power or energy efficiency or how to put business plans together. ENGIE also will arrange an annual tour of the wind farm for students, faculty, and staff.

Brown called the deal "a major step in the University's strategy for mitigating our CO₂ emissions and our commitment to bring our net emissions to zero by 2040."

The University will buy 205,000 megawatt hours of electricity annually from ENGIE during the contract. This amount is equivalent to displacing greenhouse gas emissions from 33,000 motor vehicles over the course of a year, says BU sustainability director Dennis Carlberg, and the purchase is essential to enabling ENGIE to procure financing for construction of its wind farm.

Buying power outside of its New England backyard gives BU added punch against climate change, Carlberg says. That's because the power grid in the upper Midwest is far more reliant on environmentally harmful fossil fuels than New England's. The Power Purchase Agreement will provide essential financing for the South Dakota wind farm, he says, which in turn will boost that region's store of cleaner energy.

The wind farm also will deliver economic benefits to its region, including annual payments to local landowners who host wind turbines on their property and tax payments. **RB**