

TULSA WORLD

Enel to build \$1 billion solar panel plant at Tulsa Port of Inola

[Carmen Forman](#) May 22, 2023



International green energy company Enel will join Italy-based tissue maker Sofidel at the Tulsa Port of Inola, a 2,500-acre industrial park located about 20 miles east of Tulsa.

An international green energy company will build a solar panel manufacturing facility at the Tulsa Port of Inola in what is being called the largest economic development project in state history.

Enel North America picked Oklahoma to be the home of one of the largest solar cell and panel manufacturing plants in the nation, the company and its affiliate, 3Sun USA LLC, announced in a Monday news release.

The Italian company expects to invest more than \$1 billion in the new factory and create 1,000 new, permanent jobs by 2025.

In a statement, Giovanni Bertolino, head of 3Sun USA, said the company is proud to partner with a state that's already a leader in the energy industry.

"Our selection of Oklahoma is a testament to the strength of the Tulsa Port of Inola site, the state's commitment to workforce development and an attractive investment climate," he said. "With this announcement, we are taking a major step forward in developing a state-of-the-art (solar cell) factory, bringing hundreds of jobs and millions in long-term tax revenue, while moving Oklahoma to the forefront of renewables manufacturing."

Construction on the more than 2 million-square-foot factory will begin in the fall. The company expects to begin manufacturing solar panels by the end of 2024. The building project is anticipated to create more than 1,800 construction jobs.

Enel's announcement comes mere days after Gov. Kevin Stitt signed into law a \$218.6 million incentive package intended to seal the deal. Stitt and Oklahoma Department of Commerce officials have said Enel's factory will be the biggest economic development project in the state.

"Enel's expansion is a huge win for Oklahoma, and I'm thrilled by their record investment in our state's economy and workforce, that will have

a lasting legacy and continue to impact Oklahomans for generations," Stitt said in a statement.

Under the newly created Perform Act, Enel will be eligible to recover up to 10% of its capital expenditures and/or payroll costs with a minimum required investment of \$1 billion. To qualify for the full \$180 million in state incentives, Enel will have to invest \$1.8 billion in Oklahoma over 10 years.

Lawmakers also earmarked \$38.6 million for water and sewer improvements at the Tulsa Port of Inola as part of the deal.

President Joe Biden said clean-energy and business-friendly policies from his administration helped pave the way for Enel's expansion in the U.S.

The Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act, which includes billions of dollars in subsidies to increase green energy development and encourage companies to build solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicle batteries in the U.S., spurred Enel officials to look at sites for a new factory, according to a company news release.

"Today's announcement from Enel is just the latest proof that my Investing in America agenda is working, and American manufacturing is back," Biden said in a statement. "Good-paying jobs that Americans can raise a family on are being created in towns and communities in every corner of the country."

Enel already has a presence in Oklahoma. The company has a regional office in Oklahoma City and operates 13 wind farms across the state.

Discussions about the new factory have been in the works since last May when Tulsa Regional Chamber and Commerce Department

officials met with Enel executives during the PGA Championship in Tulsa, said Arthur Jackson, a senior vice president at the chamber.

"Enel North America has a global reputation for blazing new trails with clean energy, and this long-term commitment to Oklahoma as a solar panel supplier will shine a light on the Port of Inola and its ability to accommodate large-scale development," Jackson said.

Italy-based tissue maker Sofidel has called the Tulsa Port of Inola home since 2020. The 2,500-acre industrial park is located about 20 miles east of Tulsa.