

WEDC CEO says Foxconn likely to announce siting decision within a few weeks

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Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation CEO Mark Hogan said Thursday a decision on a site for Foxconn is “imminent,” with an announcement likely coming within the next few weeks.

Hogan, testifying before the Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy during a public hearing this afternoon on the \$3 billion Foxconn bill, also said the Taiwanese company is ready to start building, although the Senate and Assembly are at-odds over whether to do the special session bill or the budget first.

And Hogan said the average salary for workers at the facility would be \$20 per hour. Nine thousand of the 13,000 jobs would be filled by hourly operators making at least that, plus benefits, he said.

Asked by Rep. Bob Kulp, R-Stratford, what the incentive packages looked like from other states, Hogan said that was never a topic of discussion, adding that they were “focused from day one about what Wisconsin has to offer.”

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DOA Secretary Scott Neitzel said Foxconn was drawn to Wisconsin because they saw “people who are committed to growing the state.”

“It’s us, it’s the state of Wisconsin, it’s the people of Wisconsin,” he said.

Hogan also declined to go into specifics on clawback provisions, after being asked by Rep. Joan Ballweg, R-Markesan, saying WEDC and Foxconn haven’t yet had formal conversations on that topic yet.

Hogan also addressed concerns over Illinois residents filling Foxconn jobs, saying southeastern Wisconsin county officials have told him that “over time, many of them (Illinois residents) choose to relocate” once they take jobs in the state.

Still, he said he expected Foxconn would attract workers from different states and even different countries.

“Nobody would be naive enough to think we’ll find all 13,000 people in Wisconsin,” Hogan said.

Dems, including Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee, asked Hogan why there isn’t a minimum requirement for Wisconsin workers being outlined, saying “we are pretty much opening our doors to them and giving them whatever they want.”

Hogan said while they’ll fill as many jobs as possible with Wisconsin workers, putting a minimum requirement in legislation or a contract isn’t an “effective way” for a company to manage its business.

Members of the committee also raised concerns about the environmental waivers in the bill, which advocates say roll back protections of the state’s air and water.

The bill would exempt the Taiwanese company from needing an environmental impact statement before the project gets underway, as well as allow Foxconn to discharge dredged or fill materials in state wetlands without a state permit, among other things.

But DNR Deputy Secretary Kurt Thiede said the project was an “opportunity of a lifetime” and the environmental changes would only “eliminate some of the duplicative processes.”

“From a timeline perspective, we still believe the project can go forward expeditiously and have the regulatory framework in place to make sure the environment is protected,” he said.

See more on the hearing at [Quorum Call](#).