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Contacts:

Kathleen Gallagher, 5 Lakes Institute

414-403-1390

Kathleen@5lakesinstitute.org

Great Lakes Fusion Energy Summit to celebrate Midwest's fusion energy leadership, economic potential

May 5 event will highlight region's fusion and advanced manufacturing expertise and demonstrate Wisconsin's leadership in fusion research, workforce, and innovation

MADISON, WI. APRIL 28, 2026 – Fusion experts, industry leaders, investors, and policymakers from more than a dozen states and several countries will gather on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus May 5 for the Great Lakes Fusion Energy Summit to examine fast-emerging fusion technologies and supply chain opportunities for Wisconsin and the Midwest region.

With the first grid-scale fusion power plants expected to be operational in the early 2030s, the summit offers participants an opportunity to shape the region's growing fusion energy hub and build on its strengths in this industry, which is estimated to reach as much as \$550 billion annually by the 2050s.

In his State of the State address earlier this year, Gov. Tony Evers named fusion research as a top priority for Wisconsin, announcing a partnership between the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin–Madison's Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics to conduct the state's nuclear energy siting study.

The effort will "provide key insights into the state's nuclear energy potential" and examine siting considerations for a range of nuclear energy technologies, including fusion energy, according to the [study's website](#).

"Nuclear energy is the largest source of clean power in our country, and it's a safe, reliable, carbon-free option to power our homes and businesses," said Gov. Evers. "Wisconsin is already

making strategic investments in our state to boost our homegrown innovation, and this new partnership will be an asset to this work moving forward.”

“Fusion energy presents a golden opportunity for Wisconsin and surrounding states to gain an early lead and shape a high-potential industry,” said Kathleen Gallagher, Executive Director of 5 Lakes Institute, which leads the Wisconsin Fusion Energy Coalition and the Great Lakes Fusion Energy Alliance. “We cannot let this once-in-a-century opportunity slip through our fingers.”

As part of the state’s focus on fusion research, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) awarded a \$778,000 Ignite Wisconsin grant to the Wisconsin Fusion Energy Coalition, led by 5 Lakes Institute and anchored by UW–Madison’s fusion research strength and commercialization capacity, to help establish Wisconsin as a national hub for fusion energy commercialization.

“Fusion energy is an emerging global industry where Wisconsin and the Great Lakes Region is uniquely positioned to lead,” said John W. Miller, secretary and CEO of WEDC. “This summit is an exciting opportunity to share with others the work we’re doing here in Wisconsin.”

Wisconsin has emerged as a regional and national hub for fusion research and collaboration, driven by decades of leadership at UW–Madison and a growing ecosystem of industry partnerships and startup companies.

Home to one of the nation’s top nuclear engineering programs and the most comprehensive plasma physics program in the country, UW–Madison anchors a unique convergence of scientific depth, collaborative research, geographic location, and regional manufacturing strength.

Over the past 60 years, the university has trained many of the nation’s top fusion scientists and engineers and spun out four U.S. fusion companies, Realta Fusion, SHINE Technologies, Type One Energy, and Xantho Technologies. All of this, including facilities that have already achieved first plasma, is building momentum from lab to market.

“It is our pleasure to host the Great Lakes Fusion Energy Summit this year,” said Dorota Brzezinska, UW–Madison vice chancellor for research. “Bringing the summit to campus reinforces our commitment to advancing high-risk, high-reward research at the frontiers of energy science. The summit will convene experts across plasma physics, materials science, computation, and systems engineering -- all critical for translating fundamental fusion research into scalable technologies and national energy solutions – and strengthen public-private partnerships.”

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, a founding partner of the Wisconsin Fusion Energy Coalition, is working to ensure the economic benefits of these developments.

"Fusion technology is poised to have a transformative impact on the global economy and energy ecosystem," said Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce President Zach Brandon. "We are proud to support this effort to highlight Wisconsin's leading position as a place that creates sustainable solutions to the world's most complex challenges."

Summit attendees will hear from leading fusion experts and researchers during breakouts and keynote speeches, receive in-person and virtual tours of fusion labs and experiments at UW–Madison and the University of Illinois, and learn more about the future of fusion and the fusion supply chain. More than 90 companies, many of which are already operating in or supplying the fusion industry, will be at the summit.

The event is organized by 5 Lakes Institute in partnership with the UW–Madison College of Engineering and the broader fusion energy community. More information, including the agenda and registration details, is available at bit.ly/4vJCcUe.