

Hemlock Could Invest \$3 Billion In Tenn. Solar Plant

Erik Schelzig, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Hemlock Semiconductor on Monday confirmed it is negotiating with Tennessee officials on an incentive package on a potential \$3 billion expansion of its solar materials plant in Clarksville.

The Hemlock, Mich.-based company issued its statement after a member of Gov. Bill Haslam's administration announced in a Senate subcommittee earlier in the day that the state it is pursuing a \$150 million bond issue to make infrastructure improvements at the site.

State Budget Director Bill Bradley told the panel that the money would be directed to the industrial development board in Montgomery County and that the expansion would create 900 new jobs at the plant.

Lola Potter, a spokeswoman for the state Finance Department, stressed that the expansion is "not a done deal," but that the Haslam administration wants to pass the legislation authorizing the money so it is available in the event that an agreement is struck.

Jarrold Erpelding, a spokesman for Hemlock's Midland, Mich.-based corporate parent Dow Corning Corp., said in a statement that Hemlock and state officials are working to "develop an incentive package that enables both the State of Tennessee and Hemlock Semiconductor to continue to grow and prosper."

Hemlock Semiconductor Group in 2008 announced an initial investment of \$1.2 billion to build the Clarksville plant, breaking ground on the facility the following year.

Hemlock is a joint venture between Dow Corning and two Japanese companies, Shin-Etsu Handotai Co. and Mitsubishi Materials Corp. The company produces polycrystalline silicon, also known as polysilicon, a raw material used to make solar cells and semiconductor

Rep. Joe Pitts, D-Clarksville, said he was encouraged by the administration's efforts to get Hemlock to expand.

"It's all about jobs, jobs, jobs," Pitts said.

Pitts said he expects the region around Clarksville to become a solar technology hotbed because of the Hemlock plant.

"It will set an industry standard, it will draw in people who are looking to associate

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with like-minded people who want to be around the science of solar technology," he said.

"We'll see spinoffs from that, but it's got to start somewhere — and Hemlock Semiconductor is a great place to start."

German solar industry supplier Wacker Chemical Corp. earlier this year broke ground on a \$1.5 billion polysilicon plant in southeastern Tennessee. The Bradley County plant is expected to create up to 650 jobs and is expected to begin operations in late 2013.

The plant in southeastern Tennessee is Wacker's first of that kind outside of Europe. Wacker has more than 16,000 employees worldwide.

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