

Plunkett Cooney helps build Michigan's green energy future

Firm co-sponsors and presents at the German American Energy Conference in Berlin

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To help accelerate the development of Michigan's green energy industry, Plunkett Cooney, one of the state's oldest, largest and most successful full-service law firms, served as a co-sponsor and presenter at the first-ever German American Energy Conference, March 30 – April 2 in Berlin.

Among the presenters were U.S. Energy Secretary Dr. Steve Chu and federal ministers from the government of Germany, including Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Foreign Office, Dr. Karl-Theodor Freiherr zu Guttenberg, Ministry of Economics and Technology and Sigmar Gabriel, Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Representing the State of Michigan was Frederick W. Hoffman, Special Advisor to the Governor for Economic Development and Special Projects.

"Michigan is determined to be at the forefront of the green energy revolution and we have incredible assets to leverage, from leading universities to deep engineering and manufacturing expertise," said Dennis Cowan, a Plunkett Cooney partner and leader of the firm's business law department. "Our goal is to help companies that want to tap into Michigan's potential to navigate its legal, regulatory and policy environment, and take home lessons from Germany about ways to improve the system."

The conference brought together government officials, academics, energy companies, investors and professionals from Germany and the United States, including Plunkett Cooney senior attorney Reinhard H. Lemke.

"Germany is a global leader in renewable energy and growth in the sector is going to accelerate rapidly in the United States as the country works to reduce its dependence on imported oil and reduce carbon emissions," said Lemke. "There is much we can learn from each other."

In Germany, employment in the renewable-energy sector has climbed from 160,000 to nearly 300,000 since 2004. According to a recent study, green technology is expected to pass the auto and electrical engineering industries to become the nation's No. 1 employer by 2020.

In Michigan, Governor Jennifer Granholm has set a goal of reducing the state's reliance on fossil fuels to generate electricity by 45 percent by 2020, and the state plans to invest heavily in Michigan-produced wind turbines, solar panels and energy efficiency devices.

PLUNKETT COONEY HELPS BUILD MICHIGAN'S GREEN ENERGY FUTURE Cont.

"Another benefit of our involvement in this conference is the chance to talk to German businesses about Michigan's great natural resources, which position us as a key area for renewable energy efforts and develop jobs here in Michigan," Cowan said.

The organizers of the German American Energy Conference are the German Energy Agency and the German American Chambers of Commerce. For more information on the conference, visit <http://www.gaccny.com/en/>.

Established in 1913, Plunkett Cooney is one of the Midwest's oldest and largest full-service law firms with more than 150 attorneys in nine Michigan cities, Columbus, Ohio and Indianapolis, Indiana. The firm has achieved the highest rating (AV) awarded by Martindale-Hubbell, a leading, international directory of law firms.