Give the Green Light to Clean Energy
Time to Update Illinois’ Renewable Portfolio Standard

SB 103 / HB 2864 (Frerichs / Mautino) Creates a no-cost fix to ratepayers for the Renewable Energy Standard (RPS), which will help ensure that renewable energy development, responsible for more than 20,000 jobs since 2007, continues.

A Success for State Investment, Jobs, and the Environment

Illinois was among the top five states for renewable energy growth during past five years, with $1.6 billion invested in 2012 alone. Since 2007, clean energy investments have led to more than 20,000 Illinois jobs, $28.5 million in annual property tax revenues for local schools, and $13 million annually in direct payments to landowners—all during the worst recession in generations. In addition, renewable energy has saved consumers $177 million in wholesale electricity costs and eliminated 5 million tons of air pollution.

We’re off to a great start, but we can do better! In order to stay on track, we need to update the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to suit today’s competitive power market.

Our electricity markets have changed a lot since 2007, and we need to update the RPS to reflect that, to make sure we’re incentivizing investment in wind and solar projects here in Illinois. Illinois is not alone in seeking investments from clean energy industries. To remain competitive, and keep the benefits flowing, we need to click the “update” button on Illinois’ RPS.

Adjusting Course

When we first passed the RPS, most of us got our power from one of two suppliers, and clean energy targets applied equally to both – prioritizing investment in Illinois. Today Illinois consumers are getting their energy from dozens of suppliers, and the clean energy targets in the RPS don’t apply equally. Investment in Illinois is no longer a priority, and dollars are either flowing out of state, or being swept, borrowed, or diverted away from Illinois projects. Outdated kinks in the law restrict the Illinois Power Agency from investing what funds it does have at its disposal.
The end result is that fewer supplier clean energy investments are made in Illinois, while others have been swept away. The inability to spend clean energy funds for their intended purpose has resulted in a sharp slowdown in building new renewable energy projects in Illinois, threatening to stop the job growth, consumer savings, and cleaner air we have enjoyed since the RPS was enacted.

Second, we need to invest the Renewable Energy Resources Fund for its intended purpose – creating jobs and cleaning the air. The Renewable Energy Resources Fund is not funded with tax dollars, but with contributions from electric suppliers. It is a golden opportunity to help meet our clean energy targets if the General Assembly allocates these funds to the Illinois Power Agency and gives the green light for their investment in Illinois projects.

Moving to clean energy has already paid off for Illinois. Clean energy companies have more than $4.7 billion in new Illinois wind and solar projects ready for development. Let’s keep the benefits coming, and green light the next generation of clean energy investments in Illinois. We need the General Assembly to update the RPS this spring, and keep us on track to a brighter future.

**Restore Renewable Energy Investment**

Illinois needs to act this Spring to stay on track to a clean energy future, and keep delivering jobs, investment, savings, and cleaner air. First, we need to update the RPS. Legislation now pending in the General Assembly could fix this problem, bringing billions in new investment to the state. The fix is a simple adjustment to the way the renewable energy funds are held, which will result in a larger, more stable pool of funds that can be used to procure clean energy. Clean energy targets would apply more equally to all suppliers, and increase the likelihood to meet those targets with Illinois projects. Illinois businesses and ratepayers will not be asked to bear additional costs, and all consumer protections and electricity rate caps will remain in place.

**Fix the RPS – Vote YES on**

**SB 103 (Frerichs) / HB 2864 (Mautino)**