



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER
Protecting the Midwest's Environment and Natural Heritage

OPENING REMARKS

VISION: GROWING CHICAGO'S CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

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Welcome to the *Growing Chicago's Clean Energy Economy* Conference and Strategy Meeting, which is jointly convened by the Environmental Law & Policy Center, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center. Today, we will be focusing on key strategies for seizing opportunities to grow Chicago's clean energy economy, which is a win-win-win for environmental progress, job creation and economic growth and vitality.

Let's start off by briefly highlighting and summarizing, first, where we are; second, where we hope to go; and third, what do we need to do in order to get there.

1. Where We Are

Chicago is a leading clean energy corporate headquarters city, especially for wind power companies. We have more major wind power company HQ than any other city in the United States. This reflects our natural advantages of geographical centrality, transportation connectivity for regional, national and international mobility through O'Hare Airport, and the vibrant Chicago community as a desirable place to live and work.

Chicago and Illinois are not yet a wind equipment manufacturing center, although some component parts are made in the region.

Chicago and Illinois are not yet a solar equipment manufacturing center, although, again, some component parts are made here.

The Chicago region can be a skill center with trained solar and wind power installers and trade labor jobs. We can be a skill center for entrepreneurial business and capital formation. There are some promising developments, although clean energy financing in Chicago is not yet where it needs to be.

Our policy framework is generally strong compared to many other cities and states, and Illinois is a top 6 wind power state in terms of installed capacity (about 2,000 MW), although we are #16 in terms of wind power potential – far behind ND, SD, MN and IA. That favorable positioning has much to do with Illinois' initial RPS in-state policy, the size of Illinois' power market, and that we are a strong transmission center positioned well to sell power to the east and south. Other states – with higher wind speeds – will predictably surpass Illinois unless we drive policies that enable Chicago and Illinois to leap and stay ahead.

2. Where We Hope To Go

The upcoming report of the Chicago Renewable Energy Working Group lays out a strong and thoughtful set of policy recommendations and implementation steps growing from the City of Chicago's Climate Action Plan. The corporate headquarters center focus plays to Chicago's natural advantages. We do need to better seize targeted manufacturing opportunities. We need to seize the opportunities of skilled labor and sophisticated financiers.

IF we want to be a wind and solar development leader here – creating the jobs and economic development value, as well as environmental performance benefits – then Chicago and Illinois need to be policy leaders and get the implementation of these policies right. That means at the very least: (1) Continue the RPS in-state preference for wind power developments; (2) Ramp up quickly the solar set aside with an in-state preference: why should Illinois ratepayers subsidize purchases of SRECs from solar development in PA, NJ and NC? (3) Through the Illinois Power Authority and Illinois Commerce Commission provide for long-term power purchase contracts in the annual procurement process; and (4) Improve and expand net metering and other policies designed to spur distributed renewable energy generation.

3. What Do We Need To Do In Order To Get There

The emerging clean renewable energy business sector in Chicago must have an effective policy/political strategy to advance legislation and regulatory policies that both spur local renewable energy development and enable Chicago and Illinois to be more than just competitive, but, indeed, to be a renewable energy leader. Chicago must have a smart business attraction and retention strategy. Chicago needs to have a targeted manufacturing supply chain strategy. Chicago can and should be the greenest city in America – and the world.