

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) is a historic law that combats climate change, creates middle-class careers in the clean energy sector, improves public health, and supports disadvantaged communities. The bipartisan legislation overwhelmingly passed by a vote of 83-33 in the Illinois House of Representatives and 37-17 in the Illinois Senate, and was signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker on September 15, 2021.

A PRO-CLIMATE LAW

- Puts Illinois on the path to 50% renewable energy by 2040 and 100% renewable energy by 2050.
- Establishes goal of one million electric vehicles (EVs) in Illinois by 2030, spurred by consumer rebates of \$4,000 from July 2022 to June 2026, \$2,000 from July 2026 to June 2028, and \$1,500 from July 2028 onwards.
- Stabilizes nuclear power in Illinois, which accounts for about half of Illinois' net electricity generation.
- Devotes 15% of Adjustable Block Program renewable energy credits (119 megawatts per year) to Carbon-Free Schools Solar projects located at public schools, with priority given to Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools.
- Creates new incentives for commercial and residential customers to add energy storage to solar systems.

A PRO-WORKER LAW

- Creates 280,000 job-years for Illinois residents on the path to 100% clean energy—every one gigawatt of utility-scale wind and solar power installed creates 7,300 jobs, including 2,600 construction jobs.
- Saves 24,000 jobs at nuclear power plants.
- Expands prevailing wage standards to all wind and solar developments, except for residential and houses of worship under 100 kilowatts.
- Expands prevailing wage standards to electric vehicle charging stations.
- Includes project labor agreements (PLAs)—comprehensive pre-hire agreements that include apprenticeship ratios and targeted hire goals—on all utility-scale wind and solar projects and brownfield solar projects.

A PRO-EQUITY LAW

- Creates the union-led Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program to recruit candidates from historically underrepresented populations and conduct career readiness training for building trades careers.
- Establishes the community-based Clean Jobs Workforce Hubs Program in 13 communities to build pipelines for young workers into clean energy jobs.
- Creates contractor incubator and accelerator programs to provide training, mentorship, and access to low-cost capital for small businesses.
- Requires that 10% of renewable energy projects be awarded to equity-eligible contractors from communities most affected by pollution and by violence, incarceration, and disinvestment; increases to 40% by 2030.
- Includes a Displaced Energy Workers Bill of Rights that provides 2 years of advance notice of a power plant closure and invests \$41 million per year to support displaced workers and former fossil fuel communities.
- Eliminates late fees and fees that utility companies were charging consumers for paying bills online.
- Implemented the Carbon Mitigation Credit which, since June 2022, has lowered ComEd customers' electricity bills by 24%.

This bipartisan legislation will ensure that Illinois' clean energy future is built locally by skilled workers. The move from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources will uphold—not undermine—local standards of compensation and craftsmanship while creating thousands of stable middle-class careers. The Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) looks forward to continuing its partnership with the Project for Middle Class Renewal and the newly-created Climate Jobs Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. ILEPI and its partners will study the immediate and long-run effects of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act on businesses and working families while providing additional policy options for elected officials to consider as Illinois transitions to a strong, resilient, and sustainable clean energy economy.

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Building Good Jobs on Clean Energy Projects: A Primer on the Economics of Unions and Prevailing Wage Standards in Illinois

Focus Area
Climate Jobs