



ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL LOBBY DAY 2010

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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY CENTER - PROTESTANTS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Rebuild our Economy with New Energy Work

RENEW Illinois

OVERVIEW

- Raises the cap on the net metering program to allow more people access to the benefits of renewable energy generation. (SB 3426-Bond / HB 6202 Burns)
- Provides interim benchmarks for solar production so the targets for the Renewable Portfolio Standard will be met by 2015. (SB 3686-Harmon / HB 6013 Graham)
- Allows homeowners to access low interest loans through a voluntary tax assessment.(SB 2505 Frerichs)
- Ensures a homeowner’s right to install renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, on their property. (HB 5429-Feigenholtz)

The RENEW package is a series of bills designed to promote green jobs while removing obstacles to the green energy economy.

BACKGROUND

By removing potential barriers to renewable energy installation, the package of bills that make up RENEW encourage the use and development of clean energy sources. The components of RENEW are an important step in Illinois’ transition to a clean energy economy. Establishing the rights of multi-unit homeowners to participate in clean energy generation, raising caps on the amount of power individuals can produce and establishing interim benchmarks for solar procurement will spur greater development and job creation within the industry. And perhaps most obvious, the increased use of renewable energy sources can greatly reduce Illinois’ contribution to climate change.



THE SOLAR RAMP UP
(SB 3686-Harmon / HB 6013 Graham)

Illinois’ Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requires that by 2015 at least 6% of the renewables must come from solar sources. Implementing a series of interim benchmarks that include provisions for a mixture of large and small scale distributed generation ensures a smooth transition to the 2015 target.

Year	% Solar Ramp Up in the RPS
2011	.38%
2012	.75%
2013	1.5%
2014	3%
2015	6%

The benchmarks create an immediate demand to put people to work installing solar energy systems and provide stability in the long term market that will help lower the price of generation.

Illinois Wind Energy Association estimates that an average 100MW project creates 160 jobs and that each MW of wind power constructed provides \$9,000 to \$13,000 in annual local property tax revenue and \$3,000 to \$6,000 in annual payments to landowners. Illinois added 632 MW of wind production in 2009. <http://www.windforillinois.com/info.php>

MIRRORING THE SUCCESS OF WIND

2009 was a banner year for new wind energy production in Illinois. It generated close to an estimated 1000 jobs and over \$18 million in revenue for the state and landowners.¹ Interim benchmarks jump start demand so the RPS that propelled Illinois' wind market to 7th in the nation can create jobs and grow the solar industry in the same way.

RENEWABLE ENERGY ACCESS FOR ALL

(HB 5429-Feigenholtz)

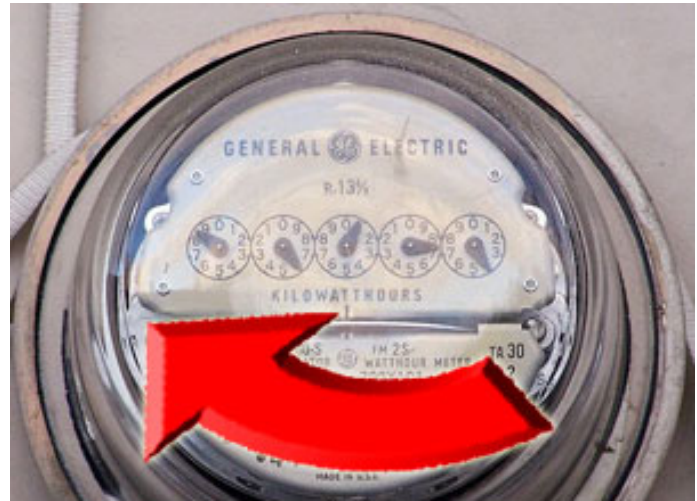
Across the country property owners have been denied the ability to place solar panels on their roofs by homeowners' and condominium associations. Most often the solar panels were blocked because of aesthetic concerns, with objections stemming from issues as trivial as the color of the panel.

RENEW ensures that property owners have the ability to make a choice about using renewable energy. This component would prevent a homeowners', property owners' or condominium unit owners' association from blocking the installation of a solar energy system or other renewable energy devices. Additionally, no deed restriction, covenant or similar binding agreement running with the land can prohibit a solar energy system or other energy device based on a renewable resource.

RAISING THE NET METERING CAP

(SB 3426-Bond HB 6202 Burns)

Increasing the cap on the net electricity metering program is another key component to expanding renewable energy access. Net metering allows individuals who generate electricity from solar, wind or another renewable source to put excess energy generated back on the grid and earn credits to put toward future energy use. Illinois' current net metering program is capped so that cumulatively personal renewable generation is only allowed to supply up to 1% of peak energy demand, and credits earned by individuals expire at the end of a year. This legislation would raise the cap to 5% and



A net meter literally spins backwards when unused energy goes back on the grid.

allow more people to participate in the program and better access the benefits by eliminating the expiration date on credits.

Not only is net metering good for the environment because it encourages the use of renewable energy, but it's great for the consumer who can reduce their electricity bill. Allowing more of Illinois' electricity demand to be met by personal solar and wind systems stimulates growth in the green economy and continues to diversify the state's energy resource mix - all while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

REMOVING OBSTACLES

(SB 2505 Frerichs)

Upfront costs of installing renewable energy systems are an obstacle for many homeowners. Allowing local governments, with their bonding authority, to establish green energy special service areas would allow homeowners the opportunity to **voluntarily** enact a special assessment on their property tax. Participation in the green service area would allow them to access funds to install a renewable device or improve home and water efficiency, the cost for which could be paid back over a 20 year period.