



**For Immediate Release
October 12, 2018**

ICC CONTACT: Victoria Crawford
Office: (217) 557-5819
Victoria.Crawford@Illinois.gov

Marianne Manko
Office: (217) 782-5793
Mobile: (217) 993-1000
Marianne.Manko@Illinois.gov

ICC Holds Policy Session on Wind Energy

Chicago, IL...On Wednesday, the Illinois Commerce Commission held a policy session, led by Acting Commissioner Anastasia Palivos, to examine the impact of wind energy on Illinois' electric grid, economy, and environment and the obstacles to utility-scale wind farms.

“Wind energy is one of the fastest growing sources of renewable energy in the United States and, in 2017, provided more than six percent of Illinois' electric generation. The state still has more wind power potential, and about 600 megawatts of additional capacity is either under construction or in advanced development. Development of wind assets can reduce CO2 and strengthen our economy through job creation and savings on energy-related costs,” said Acting Commissioner Palivos.

The first panel, *Connecting to the Grid: What are the benefits and challenges associated with the interconnection and integration of wind energy on the grid?* was moderated by ICC Legal and Policy Advisor Emily Brumit. The expert panelists included Nicole Luckey, Director of Regulatory Affairs (Invenergy); Chad Craven, Manager of Transmission (Tradewind Energy); Neil Shah, Senior Manager, Resource Interconnection (MISO); and Eric Seidler, VP of Asset Management, Engineering, and Maintenance (Ameren).

Panelists discussed the benefits of interconnection and integration of wind energy onto the grid, such as stabilizing energy costs, reducing CO2 emissions, and making the grid more resilient. Panelists pointed out that Illinois still faces many challenges in wind energy integration. For example, wind farms must stay close to existing infrastructure in order to be economically feasible, which may be limiting in many circumstances. Panelists also discussed whether the build out of more transmission is necessary to increase wind production.

“With more than 7,000 MW of wind installed last year alone, now is the time to discuss the important steps Illinois, MISO and PJM can take to ensure additional wind energy can be integrated onto the system reliably and cost effectively. With small, incremental changes, we can pave the way for wind to play an even larger role in our energy mix,” said Nicole Luckey of Invenergy.

ICC Assistant to the Executive Director, Katharine McErlean, moderated the second panel, *The Economics of Wind*, which explored how wind has driven down energy costs and reduced emissions in Illinois, how wind projects contribute to the Illinois economy through tax payments, jobs and other benefits. Panelists included John Hensley, Senior Director of Research (*AWEA*); Michael Goggin, Vice President (*Grid Strategies, LLC*); and Jeff Reinkemeyer, Director of Eastern Renewable Development (*Avangrid Renewables*).

Panelists explained how the economic benefits of wind energy include reducing energy costs, bring economic development dollars to rural areas, lower property taxes, and bring higher paying jobs to rural areas.

Ritta Merza, Legal and Policy Advisor for the ICC, moderated the final panel, *Legal and Policy Considerations to Increase Wind Energy*, which focused on the current legal and policy considerations that will shape the future of wind energy. Panelists included Elizabeth McErlean, Attorney (*Steptoe & Johnson LLP*); Christie Hicks, Manager (*Environmental Defense Fund*); MeLena Hessel, Policy Advocate (Environmental Law & Policy Center); and Sean Brady, Senior Counsel and Regional Policy Manager – East (*Clean Grid Alliance*).

Panelists discussed laws, such as the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA), and how they have shaped the development of wind energy in Illinois and across the country.

“While wind energy, as of 2016, contributed to less than six percent of electricity in Illinois, following the enactment of FEJA Illinois’ revised Renewable Portfolio Standard calls for 25 percent of the state’s energy to be generated from renewable resources by 2025, of which 75 percent must come from wind and solar,” said Elizabeth McErlean, Steptoe & Johnson, LLP. “To meet this ambitious goal, the Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan, developed by the Illinois Power Agency, outlines certain procurement events for renewable energy credits (RECs), including a procurement in summer 2018 for 2 million RECs delivered annually from new utility-scale wind projects.”

“Embracing Illinois’ huge potential for wind power will lead to economic growth, investment and cleaner air. Policies like time-of-use electricity rates, markets that appropriately value wind energy, and thoughtful transmission planning can help bring those benefits to bear,” said Christie Hicks, Environmental Defense Fund.

####

About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

Follow the Illinois Commerce Commission on Twitter [@ILCommerceComm](#)