



ICC Releases Draft Renewable Energy Access Plan for Stakeholder Review and Comment

Springfield, IL – On Wednesday, the Staff of the Illinois Commerce Commission released a first DRAFT of the statutorily required Renewable Energy Access Plan (REAP), opening a 120-day public review and comment period. The REAP is a comprehensive, actionable plan for supporting an equitable, reliable, and affordable transition to decarbonization and meeting Illinois’ policy requirements for a clean electricity system.

“The transition to 100% clean energy requires tremendous and active collaboration between state agencies, regional transmission organizations (RTOs), consumer advocate groups, and industry experts to get the job done right. We want to hear from all interested stakeholders and encourage all to review the first draft of the REAP and provide comment for consideration into the second draft to be finalized in the Fall,” said ICC Executive Director Michael Merchant.

Pursuant to the newly enacted Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), which sets a target of 100% clean energy in Illinois by 2050, the Commission is required to open an investigation to develop and adopt a renewable energy access plan by December 31, 2022. The REAP must prioritize equity throughout the energy transition. Prior to opening the investigation, a second draft will be submitted to the ICC in the Fall of 2022 and will serve as a starting point for the investigation that must begin before December 31, 2022. The ICC will then open a docketed proceeding and formally adopt an Illinois REAP. The Commission must initiate a new investigation to review and update the REAP in 2025 and every two years thereafter.

The Illinois REAP will serve as a document for clarifying and quantifying policy requirements such as determining the scale of clean energy resources and reforms needed over time to implement CEJA. Other strategic elements of the plan include:

- The plan must prioritize the closure of fossil-fueled electric generating units near environmental justice communities and identify attractive renewable areas for resource development, incorporating the importance of equity in land use;
- Optimization of existing transmission systems to support the delivery of clean electricity to consumers;
- Proactive planning of new transmission with consideration of public policy needs; and
- Enhancements to RTO markets to reduce costs and emissions, create jobs, and ensure State and regional power system reliability to prevent outages as Illinois transitions to clean energy.

According to the first draft, both MISO and PJM will need to substantially enhance their existing markets and expand their activities to effectively support implementation of Illinois’ clean electricity policy. Current markets, if left unaltered, will not produce the most cost-effective and reliable clean energy

transition, and may in some cases produce economic incentives that conflict with Illinois policy mandates. The first draft offers a preliminary assessment of reforms that will require substantial analysis, refinement, and further study to determine the most effective implementation plan. The second draft REAP will include a revised and refined list of required RTO market reforms based on input and analysis provided by MISO, PJM, and other stakeholders.

“The mission of the ICC is to ensure safe, affordable and reliable delivery of utility services. As Illinois pivots away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources we are working tirelessly with the utilities, RTOs, consumer advocates and other industry experts to ensure reliability and affordability remain strong through the transition,” said ICC Public Utilities Bureau Chief Jim Zolnierek.

The first DRAFT was co-authored by the Staff of the Illinois Commerce Commission and technical and policy experts from The Brattle Group. Consultants from Great Lakes Engineering served as contributing authors focused on land use and renewable energy access zones.

To provide stakeholders a forum for providing input regarding the development of the second draft REAP, Staff will be hosting workshops open to all interested parties. Details regarding the workshops will be forthcoming.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Access Plan click [here](#).

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