

# An Open Letter on Clean Energy

*Signed by Illinois Scientists, Engineers, Economists,  
and Health Professionals*

May 2015



**Union of  
Concerned Scientists**

# The signers of this statement are Illinois scientists, engineers, economists, and health professionals who have expertise relevant to our need to transition to a clean energy economy and have earned, or are working toward, an advanced degree.

Clean energy is working for Illinois. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are supporting tens of thousands of jobs and providing affordable electricity for families and businesses. Wind and solar power and investments in energy-saving technologies are also helping to improve public health by reducing pollution and reining in dangerous heat-trapping carbon emissions. By boosting clean energy investments to power our homes and businesses, we can build on our progress and create a robust clean energy economy in Illinois, with thousands of new jobs and billions of dollars in new clean energy investments.

However, Illinois is at risk of falling behind as a clean energy leader. Our current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), which requires 25 percent of Illinois's electricity to come from renewable energy resources such as wind and solar power by 2025, has one of the strongest targets in the country. But flaws in the law prevent utilities from engaging in the long-term planning needed to drive sustained investment in clean energy resources in Illinois. As a result, renewable energy development in Illinois has stalled. No new wind farms came online in the state in 2013 or 2014, allowing Oklahoma to surpass Illinois as the country's fourth-largest wind power producer.<sup>1</sup> Illinois also fell from thirteenth in solar power installation in 2013 to twenty-sixth in 2014.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, our current Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (EEPS), which requires 2 percent electricity savings by

2015 and every year thereafter, has helped consumers save money since 2008. However, utilities are currently prevented from investing in all cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities, and from providing consumers with further help in cutting energy use and saving money.

To realize Illinois's clean energy potential, we need a stable and predictable market to drive ongoing investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. As Illinois scientists, engineers, economists, and health professionals, we know those investments will benefit Illinois families, businesses, and the environment. We support fixing and strengthening state policies to drive investments in energy efficiency capable of reducing demand by 20 percent and boosting renewable energy to provide 35 percent of our electricity. We also believe that the Illinois EPA can and should develop a market-based approach to deliver additional cost-effective carbon emissions reductions.

Without these measures, our state will miss an important opportunity to invest in a sustainable energy future, create clean energy jobs, cut heat-trapping carbon emissions, and reduce harmful air pollution. By generating more of our electricity from renewable energy sources and cutting power use by improving energy efficiency, we can restore Illinois's position of clean energy leadership and ensure continued protection of all that makes the Prairie State a great place in which to live.

***We support fixing and strengthening state policies to drive investments in energy efficiency capable of reducing demand by 20 percent and boosting renewable energy to provide 35 percent of our electricity.***

1 Daniels, S. 2015. Illinois drops in U.S. wind power ranks. *Crains's Chicago Business*, January 28. Online at [www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20150128/NEWS11/150129792/illinois-drops-in-u-s-wind-power-ranks](http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20150128/NEWS11/150129792/illinois-drops-in-u-s-wind-power-ranks).  
2 Greentech Media, Inc. and Solar Energy Industries Association. 2015. U.S solar market insight. Online at [www.greentechmedia.com/research/ussmi](http://www.greentechmedia.com/research/ussmi).

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