

# [***Broad, Bipartisan Group Announces Market-Based Solution Preserving Low-Carbon Energy in Illinois; Comprehensive standard will reduce carbon emissions, increase renewable energy, and maintain affordable, reliable electricity while saving local jobs***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5FD1-G7V1-DXP3-R36V-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

A bipartisan group of legislators, along with business, labor and community leaders, today announced their support for legislation creating a state Low Carbon Portfolio Standard that establishes Illinois as a national leader in efforts to reduce carbon ***emissions*** with minimal consumer impacts.

Introduced in both the Senate as SB 1585 and the House as HB 3293, the legislation would help reduce carbon ***emissions***, increase renewable energy and maintain affordable, reliable electricity for consumers and businesses. In addition, the measure will ensure continued operations of the state's nuclear power plants, which are responsible for nearly half of all electricity produced in Illinois. The market-based solution is modeled after findings from a recent HR 1146 report prepared by four state agencies that analyzed the economic, environmental and reliability impacts of premature nuclear plant closures in Illinois.

Under the proposed legislation, certain electric utilities would be required to purchase low-carbon energy credits to match 70 percent of electricity used on the distribution system from qualified sources, which include solar, wind, hydro, nuclear, tidal, wave and clean coal. The legislation includes safeguards to protect consumers similar to those for Illinois' other clean energy programs. For example, a consumer price cap would limit the impact to a 2.015 percent annual increase compared to 2009 rates, or about $2/month for the average Illinois residential electricity customer, less than the increase customers would face if the nuclear plants close early. In addition, if wholesale electric prices exceed a certain level, any excess revenues would be rebated to all Illinois electric customers on their bills.

"Illinois needs an all-of-the-above energy strategy that will help reduce harmful air ***emissions***, grow renewable energy and maintain our state's existing nuclear plants, which are our leading source of carbon-free energy," said Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago). "With a 70 percent carbon-free energy standard, this legislation would make Illinois the national leader in ensuring a clean energy future - even ahead of other environmental leaders like California."

"This comprehensive legislation balances the need to preserve our nuclear plants while at the same time promoting other low-carbon energy resources such as wind, solar, hydro and clean coal, among others," said Senator Sue Rezin (R-Morris). "The Low Carbon Portfolio Standard doesn't pick energy winners and losers. It rewards all low-carbon energy sources - including wind, solar and nuclear -- equally through a competitive market."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Clean Power Plan will require all states to reduce carbon ***emissions*** from existing power plants. Illinois is tasked with reducing carbon ***emissions*** from existing power plants by 30 percent from 2005 levels by the year 2030 and must have a plan in place to achieve these reductions by 2017.  The legislation includes a provision that the program will end on the later of December 31, 2021, or when Illinois implements a program to comply with the EPA's Clean Power Plan.

"This legislation will help ensure Illinois has the low-carbon energy sources it will need to meet its obligations under the U.S. EPA's Clean Power Plan," said Representative Larry Walsh, Jr. (D-Joliet). "There is simply no way Illinois will achieve meaningful carbon reductions and meet the EPA goals without preserving our current nuclear fleet."

"Through this legislation, we will continue our state's position as a clean energy leader, preserve thousands of jobs and drive economic development," said Representative Mike Tryon (R-Crystal Lake). "Once enacted, this bill will help us secure our economy today and in the future, while maintaining important consumer protections for the benefit of all Illinois families and businesses."

The State of Illinois report on potential nuclear power plant closings prepared in response to House Resolution 1146 recommended a Low Carbon Portfolio Standard as one of its potential policy solutions. Some of the other key findings of the report include:

The gross impact of the plants' closure would total $1.8 billion annually in lost economic activity and nearly 8,000 full-time jobs lost. Economic damages from the incremental increase in carbon dioxide if the plants close would range from $2.5 billion to $18.6 billion over 10 years. PJM, Northern Illinois' regional transmission grid operator, which nearly experienced rolling blackouts during the 2014 polar vortex, found the system would be "unreliable" under all premature plant closure scenarios. According to both PJM and MISO, the two regional grid operators for Illinois, early nuclear plant closures would cause a significant spike in electricity prices for Illinois residents and businesses, increasing up to 10 percent or $437 million for ComEd customers in the first year, and $810 million to $1.2 billion for Ameren customers.

A wide range of Illinois stakeholders support the legislation, including labor unions, business leaders, chambers of commerce and municipal officials.

"Illinois' nuclear energy plants provide thousands of good-paying jobs that hard working families depend on. The plants are important assets to the state of Illinois in terms of their impact on the state's economy and contributions to the reliability of the electric grid," said Lonnie Stephenson, international vice president, IBEW Sixth District. "We urge the Illinois General Assembly to take up and pass this bill. It's good for Illinois, good for working families, and good for our economy."

"As a neighbor to one of Illinois' nuclear power plants, I can tell you that these plants are the economic lifeblood of our communities," said Clinton Mayor Carolyn Peters. "These plants provide thousands of high-paying jobs, millions of dollars in tax revenues for our schools and other vital services, and significant contributions to our local non-profits. We ask the General Assembly to act now to prevent the catastrophic premature closure of our state's nuclear plants."

"As a long-time supporter of Illinois' clean energy facilities, GE Hitachi is proud of our tremendously positive impact on the economy and environment in the state. The economic impact of deploying hundreds of nuclear experts across Illinois cannot be overstated," said Christopher White, vice president, Communications, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy. "The Low Carbon Portfolio Standard will allow us to continue to grow our operations here and help provide clean energy to Illinois."

"Exelon's six state-of-the-art Illinois nuclear plants provide around-the-clock reliable energy, more than 5,900 local jobs, nearly $9 billion in annual economic impact and over 90 percent of our state's zero-***emission*** energy," said Joseph Dominguez, senior vice president, Governmental and Regulatory Affairs and Public Policy, Exelon. "Illinois cannot achieve its clean energy goals without nuclear power. This bill is a cost-effective, market-based way to encourage reductions in carbon ***emissions*** and protect our state's economy. On behalf of Exelon's more than 12,000 Illinois employees, I commend our state lawmakers for their leadership and urge them to enact this bill into law."

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit:[*http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/broad-bipartisan-group-announces-market-based-solution-preserving-low-carbon-energy-in-illinois-300042200.html*](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/broad-bipartisan-group-announces-market-based-solution-preserving-low-carbon-energy-in-illinois-300042200.html)

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