

# [***Illinois’ Nuclear Plants Near 41 Years of Providing Safe, Reliable, Carbon-Free Power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6377-J641-F0YC-N39C-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Chicago: Exelon Corporation (EXCU) has issued the following press release:

At a time when the nation’s energy grid is increasingly challenged by extreme heat and storms, the four nuclear plants serving Chicago and northern Illinois are approaching a combined 41 years, or 15,000 consecutive days, of continuous service. The Dresden, Byron, Braidwood and LaSalle nuclear plants located outside the Chicago region provide more than two-thirds of the state’s carbon-free energy and are the only clean-energy resources that can operate around-the-clock, 365 days a year.

Byron reached 5,000 consecutive days online last week, while Dresden reached 4,260 consecutive days during the same period. Braidwood Station (3,975 days) and LaSalle Station (1,603 days) add to the streak, making the Illinois plants among the leaders in the industry for continuous operation.

“The workers at our plants are the best in the industry and operate our nuclear units at world class levels of safety and reliability, ensuring we remain online when our communities need our electricity the most,” said Dave Rhoades, Exelon Generation Chief Nuclear Officer. “Powering Illinois with clean energy 24 hours a day, seven days a week is a hallmark of our zero-carbon nuclear fleet. ”

Including Exelon Generation’s Clinton and Quad Cities nuclear stations, Illinois has six nuclear sites that provide 90 percent of the state’s clean energy and serve as an essential complement to the state’s other clean energy resources. The plants run close to 100 percent of the time in summer and winter when electricity use is high, while solar averages 20 percent and wind averages 30 percent.

The importance of reliable, carbon-free energy has been accentuated by the prevalence of extreme weather brought on by climate change, forcing policymakers to confront difficult decisions about the future of clean energy in Illinois and across the nation. Low power prices and market rules that give fossil-fuel power plants an unfair advantage forced Exelon Generation to announce last year that it will close the Byron Generating Station in Ogle County in September and the Dresden Generating Station in Grundy County in November. The Braidwood and LaSalle nuclear plants also are at high risk of premature retirement in the near term.

With just weeks to go before the first of the plants permanently closes, policymakers continue working on legislation that would preserve the plants as part of a comprehensive plan to maintain and grow clean-energy jobs, keep energy bills affordable and achieve net-zero ***emissions*** by 2050. The four Chicago-area plants support 28,000 direct and indirect jobs and contribute $3.5 billion annually to Illinois’ economy.

Losing Byron and Dresden will result in a cumulative increase in carbon dioxide ***emissions*** of more than 100 million metric tons over the next decade, even after taking into account the increase in renewables that would occur under the proposed energy legislation. This is more than the entire volume of carbon dioxide ***emissions*** otherwise projected for northern Illinois over the same period. These additional ***emissions*** would be caused by the regional grid operator dispatching fossil generation to make up for the lost zero-carbon energy coming from Dresden and Byron.

“Illinois works best when its residents have jobs and their places of employment have the affordable electricity they need to work each day,” said Sarah Downs, executive director of the Byron Area Chamber of Commerce. “Byron Station hitting 5,000 consecutive days of power production is incredible. These nuclear plants provide everything residents have asked for: jobs, reliable and environmentally friendly power generation and a solid tax base for local communities. Other states wish they had this much baseload, carbon-free energy to power their businesses and homes. ”

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