

# [***Passage of Illinois Energy Legislation Preserves Nuclear Plants and Strengthens State’s Clean Energy Leadership***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63MJ-3WC1-JDG9-Y2RD-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

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

Exelon Generation said today that it is preparing to refuel its Byron and Dresden nuclear plants as a result of the action taken by the Illinois legislature to enact a comprehensive energy bill. Once signed by the Governor, the legislation will strengthen Illinois ’ clean energy leadership, protect the state ’ s economy by preserving tens of thousands of jobs and prevent an increase in pollution and energy costs that would harm consumers if the plants closed.

“We commend the Governor, the General Assembly, our partners at IBEW Local 15 and the coalition of labor leaders and members who worked so hard to pass this roadmap for rebuilding our economy and addressing the climate crisis by investing in clean energy in a way that ensures that jobs and environmental benefits are shared equitably,” said Christopher Crane, president and CEO of Exelon. “This new policy offers a better future for the employees who have run these plants at world-class levels, the plant communities that we are privileged to serve and all Illinoisans eager to build a clean-energy economy that works for everyone. ”

The legislation promotes jobs and lowers carbon ***emissions*** by scaling up renewables, investing in electrification and adopting critical job training programs and labor standards. It also creates a process for the state to procure carbon mitigation credits from nuclear plants, which are critical to keeping Illinois on a path to reach net zero ***emissions*** by 2050. The bill will mitigate widely acknowledged flaws in regional energy markets and compensate nuclear plants for their clean-energy benefits in much the same way that wind and solar are compensated today. It also will put the state on a path to 100 percent clean energy at a fraction of the cost of achieving the same goal with only renewables.

More than 60 percent of Illinois ’ electricity consumption and approximately 90 percent of its carbon-free energy comes from Exelon Generation ’ s six nuclear plants in Illinois. Studies have shown that when nuclear plants close, plants that burn fossil fuels operate much more often, increasing harmful carbon and air pollution, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Dresden Generating Station, located in Morris, Ill., was slated to retire in November and the Byron Generating Station, located just outside Byron, Ill., was scheduled to begin the defueling process and permanent shut down starting today. Despite being among the safest, most efficient and reliable units in the nation ’ s nuclear fleet, Dresden and Byron face revenue shortfalls in the hundreds of millions of dollars because of market rules that allow fossil fuel plants to underbid clean resources in regional electricity markets.

In addition to Byron and Dresden, the legislation creates an opportunity to preserve the Braidwood nuclear plant, which also is economically challenged and at imminent risk of premature retirement. The LaSalle nuclear plant also will remain operating for the five-year duration of the carbon mitigation credit program.

By supporting these always-on, zero carbon nuclear plants, the legislation ensures that Illinois stays on track to meet its climate goals at the lowest cost to consumers. Byron alone generates 30 percent more clean energy than comes from all the solar and wind ever built in Illinois. An analysis by an independent consulting firm found that it would take $29 billion – or more than $6 per month for every Illinois household over the next 25 years – to replace just Byron ’ s carbon-free energy with renewable sources, much less reach 100 percent clean.

In January 2019, the state committed to reducing greenhouse gas ***emissions*** consistent with the targets set in the Paris climate agreement. ***Emissions***-free energy from the four nuclear plants puts the state 85 percent toward the 2025 goal versus 20 percent had they retired prematurely and been replaced by polluting resources.

Once the legislation is signed into law, Exelon Generation will move to immediately fill hundreds of vacant positions and resume capital projects required for long-term operation. The company also will alert the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and PJM of the decision to keep the plants operating.

Additional background on the plants:

* An independent analysis found that the four plants support 28,000 direct and indirect jobs and contribute more than $3.8 billion annually to the state ’ s GDP.

1. The same report concluded that electricity prices could increase by $3.1 billion to $4.8 billion over 10 years if the plants leave the market and are replaced with more expensive generation.
2. The baseload energy from the plants contributes to stable energy prices, which on average have been lower in northern Illinois than in any other PJM zone over the past decade. PJM includes all or parts of 13 states and the District of Columbia.

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