



## Clean Energy is a Great Investment for Illinois

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As one of only six states in the country to top 6,000 megawatts (MW) of wind energy (American Clean Power Association (ACP) 2021 Annual Report) and a growing solar sector, Illinois is a clean energy leader. As technology advances and prices decline, more opportunities arise to grow the state's clean energy economy. Illinois has received over [\\$15 billion in capital investments](#) from the renewable energy industry.

In addition, landowners are benefitting from stable incomes, local communities are seeing a surge in well-paying jobs, and of course, the state is receiving low-cost, carbon-free energy.

Wind prices have declined [72 percent since 2009](#), and Illinois' capacity continues to grow. Wind accounted for [11 percent of Illinois' overall electricity](#) production in 2021, almost triple the amount generated a decade earlier. Illinois currently ranks [5th in the nation](#) for installed wind capacity, with [7,037 megawatts \(MW\)](#). That's enough power for almost [3 million homes](#)! This is great news for the over 9,000 people working in family-supporting careers in the wind industry alone. Currently, there are [33 manufacturing facilities](#) in Illinois dedicated to creating parts for the wind industry. These facilities provide employees with good-paying, family-supporting jobs making products for the wind industry. Wind has also contributed more than [\\$57 million in annual state and local tax payments](#) and an impressive [\\$47 million in annual land lease payments](#) for rural landowners.

Communities in Illinois, and specifically school districts, are seeing significant impacts from the wind projects in their backyards. [According to ACP](#), when the 200 MW Bishop Hill wind energy project was being sited in the Alwood School District, Superintendent Shannon Bumann said "It really is like winning the lottery. It's the equivalent of putting up 53-million-dollar homes in your backyard within a year. What this will do is make us financially stable for quite a few years." The Alwood school district is located in Henry County, where property taxes from wind projects are nearing \$4 million. This pales in comparison to the over \$9 million that McLean County brings in from their five utilities-scale wind farms. Mark Jontry, the regional superintendent for McLean and Dewitt Counties, says that the operations in his county "...really [give] those districts a lot of flexibility on how to spend that money. Whether it's increasing the type of programming that they might want to offer in their districts for students..." or "... [allowing] them to do some facility repairs or enhancements."

Illinois' [1,909 MW of solar energy](#) is already powering over [288,000 homes](#), and almost [5,000 MW](#) are projected to come online over the next five years. Solar prices have dropped [90 percent since 2009](#) and it is currently one of the cheapest electricity sources available. The solar industry has already invested [over \\$3 billion](#) in Illinois. In addition, solar is the second largest clean energy employer in Illinois, with [6,087 Illinoisans](#) working in the state's [343 solar companies](#), including 74 manufacturers, 73 installers and developers, and 198 other related companies. Illinois' solar energy jobs grew by [over 10 percent](#) in 2021.

According to the [Solar Energy Industries Association](#), Walmart, Amazon, Target, and Lineage Logistics have all started investing in the solar market in Illinois. In fact, Amazon's 3 MW solar project in Romeoville is one of the largest corporate projects in the state. Other projects of note in the prairie state include the

255 MW Prairie Wolf Solar project in Ashmore Township, which produces enough electricity to power over 40,000 homes, and the 135 MW Dressor Plains Solar project in Herrick that can power more than 21,000 homes!

America's energy sector is in the midst of a major transition to a [clean energy economy](#). According to [Clean Jobs Midwest](#), in 2021, more than 120,000 people were employed in a clean energy job in Illinois, a five percent increase from 2020. Additionally, Illinois has regained roughly 55 percent of the clean energy jobs lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Renewable energy, which includes wind, solar, and storage, is the second-largest clean energy employer in Illinois, with [over 18,000 workers](#).

In September of 2021, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker signed the [Climate and Equitable Jobs Act \(CEJA\)](#) into law. CEJA is an omnibus energy and decarbonization bill tasked with setting Illinois on the path to 100% clean energy by 2050 and 100% carbon-free power by 2045. The bill provides funding to build 3.5 times more renewable energy every year for Illinois to get to 40% renewable energy by 2030, and 50% by 2040.

Illinois is already well on its way to a clean and renewable economy, and it will not only benefit from low-cost energy, but local businesses will be on the receiving end of an economic ripple effect that comes from such development. Citizens would be employed in local clean energy jobs and enjoy an influx of new tax revenue, which can be used to support schools, roads and other projects that benefit the entire community. Farmers will have the opportunity to keep the property in the family by diversifying their income with land-lease payments that are steady and drought-resistant. As a new era begins,

Illinois is charging up with clean energy - and that's just smart!