



Illinois People's Action
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Anthony Star, Director
Illinois Power Agency
Michael A. Bilandic Building, Suite C-504
160 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Attention: Mario Bohorquez,
Planning and Procurement Bureau Chief
Via email: mario.bohorquez@illinois.gov

Re: Chapter and Section: Chapter 8, Section 8.10, p. 154-155.

Dear Director Star,

Illinois People's Action is a member of the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition, the Illinois Climate Table and the Downstate Caucus of the Climate Table. We are a faith and community based organization with membership throughout downstate Illinois. Many of our leaders live in environmental justice communities that have been historically disenfranchised with regard to both the environment and the economy. For example, last year, Peoria was listed by Wall Street 24/7 as the worst city to live in if you are African American. In Illinois, 19% of African American kids suffer from asthma compared to 6% of white kids. Because these communities that have experienced the worst of climate change and pollution, they stand to benefit the most from the Future Energy and Jobs Act if it is implemented in a just manner. That is why we are writing today.

Illinois People's Action and the co-signers to this letter are concerned about the language in the Illinois Solar for All training section regarding percentages of hires that come from the Solar Training Pipeline Program (p 155).

"IPA proposes that Approved Vendors who participate in the Illinois Solar for All program should demonstrate that at least 33% of projects include the use of one or more job trainees from the solar training pipeline program." (p 155)

We believe that mandating only that vendors be required to hire "one or more trainees" opens the door to job tokenism. Imagine if there were 100 jobs that came out of this program with 5 workers per job for a total of 500 jobs. This requirement would only mandate that 33 of the 500 total jobs be low income workers who had come through the Illinois Solar for All Pipeline training program. That would be approximately 6%--not nearly enough.

We believe the language should be: "Illinois Solar for All projects that occur in low income communities, are required to hire at least 33% of their total hires from graduates of the Illinois solar for all training pipeline program." We would not be opposed to this being a graduated process. For example, the first year of the project, that requirement could be 10%, the second year, 15%, the third year 20%, leading up to 33% by the 5th or 6th year, but ultimately, 33% of the total number of workers would be low income people who had gone through the IL Solar for All pipeline training program.

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This graduated approach would allow time for the Solar for All Pipeline training program to get up and operating, to receive feedback from vendors who have hired graduates and to take that feedback and modify the program so that it meets the needs of both the graduates and the vendors hiring them.

It is our understanding that the Illinois proposal is based on a California model which actually has much higher numbers than proposed in Illinois and that the California model is working. As such, we do not feel we are asking too much for the Illinois Power Agency to require the total number of hires be 33% Solar for All pipeline graduates for vendors seeking Illinois Solar for All project money.

Finally, The Illinois Solar for All Program is possible because Illinois residents have paid into the program. Many of these residents are low income persons—people who helped fight for the passage of the Future Energy and Jobs Act because they wanted affordable clean renewable energy AND the jobs that go with it. The existing language will not do that. But you can. We ask you to insure that our low income and communities of color are not marginalized in the clean energy revolution. Mandating 33% of jobs go to them in the Illinois Solar for All program is a good start.

Sincerely,

Rev. Tony Pierce, Board Chair
Illinois People's Action

Kim Wasserman, Executive Director
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO)

Jennifer Ritter, Executive Director
ONE Northside

Dave Kraft, Executive Director
NEIS

Grace Pai, Organizer
The People's Lobby

Pam Richart, Co-Director
Eco Justice Collaborative

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