

From: Scott Onque <scott@faithinplace.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 4:02 PM
To: IPA.ContactUs <IPA.ContactUs@Illinois.gov>
Subject: [External] HB 2132 Rust Belt to Green Belt

Dear IPA:

The renewable energy and carbon-free goals set forth in CEJA are critical to Illinois' effectiveness in combatting the devastating impacts of climate change. We fully support the pursuit of these bold and ambitious goals. We also acknowledge that there have been and will likely continue to be challenges in deploying enough new renewable energy resources at the pace necessary to achieve those goals. We believe that we must leverage all of the resources available, in a responsible manner, in pursuit of the goals.

We wholeheartedly support HB 2132 and the offshore wind pilot project because of the great potential Lake Michigan offshore wind promises, both in creating new renewable energy resources and in delivering positive impacts to environmental justice communities. The wind blowing across Lake Michigan represents a tremendous renewable energy resource for the state of Illinois. Illinois simply cannot afford not to explore the potential that Lake Michigan offshore wind offers. The state should move forward aggressively with a pilot project.

The report rightly highlights a crucial aspect of the offshore wind pilot project, that it "... could potentially and significantly impact environmental justice communities in the Lake Calumet Region of Chicago through constructing the interconnection point, developing port facilities, and the hiring a local workforce." The pilot project will create new jobs for local residents and bring tens of millions of dollars into the South East Side, providing significant benefits this historically marginalized community that have suffered disinvestment and environmental racism since the shuttering of the steel mills.

As the report accurately points out, the contribution to emission reductions from this first, pilot-scale project, are limited. Likewise, the contribution to the renewable energy goals in CEJA is small. But the pilot project in HB 2132 is a necessary first step to building an offshore wind industry in IL that would scale to the level necessary to make considerable contributions toward those goals. An offshore wind industry in Illinois would also generate thousands of jobs for years to come, in historically marginalized communities, and establish IL and Chicago as THE leader in the Great Lakes offshore wind industry.

Thank you,



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The IL, IN, & WI Affiliate of Interfaith Power & Light



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