



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

State of Illinois Energy Transition Workforce Commission October 18, 2023 6 pm Minutes

Location:

In-person

Academic Building, Tranquility Room 209A/210A
Illinois Central College
1 College Drive
East Peoria, IL 61635

Virtual

Zoom Video Conference

Meeting ID: 895 2844 2189

Access Code: 012002

Video Link: <https://uis.zoom.us/j/89528442189?pwd=UXJzWUNhaGhhY0ZkekUzaCttbGxEdz09>

Purpose

The Energy Transition Workforce Commission was created by the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act “CEJA” (Public Act 102-0662). The Commission is charged with producing an Energy Transition Workforce Report that anticipates the impact of the energy transition on Illinois’ workforce and provides recommendations to address changes to Illinois’ workforce between 2020 - 2050. The Commission consists of CEJA Regional Administrators, leadership from multiple state agencies, and community leaders from Illinois’ business, labor, and environmental justice communities.

The commission wishes to receive public testimony from communities throughout Illinois to inform the recommendations we will make at the end of the year. The Commission would like to hear the economic impact that a closure or transition of a facility has had on businesses, schools, and families.

Agenda:

- I. Call to Order at 6:02 pm by Jason Keller, Chair, Energy Transition Workforce Commission
 - a. Roll Call of Membership – Tonda Reece (UIS), the following were present in person or via Zoom:
Angela Morrison
Sameer Doshi

Pat Devaney (not present)

Lisa Jones (not present)

Larry Dawson

Nate Keener

Shad Etchason

Michelle Cerruti

Jason Keller (Chair)

Director Kristin Richards

- Chair Keller said a quorum has been established. This meeting will be conducted a little bit differently than our normal meetings in the past. We have complied with the Open Meetings Act requirements. Note we will be taking a couple of those very quickly to adopt some minutes from prior meetings. The public comment portion will be of significant importance in this meeting and we hope to hear from individuals that are present from this community. Then anyone wishing to speak that is on via the webinar, if you can please send a message to Tonda to let her know, and we will work those in at the end of the meeting each person seeking public comment will have 3 to 5 min to speak. We would ask, when you do let Tonda know that you would wish to speak on the Webex (Zoom). If you can include your name, title, organization, email and phone number as well. What I would like to do is, do take care of a little bit of business. I believe that Tonda did distribute the minutes for the Commission's meetings on September 7th and September 13th. I would entertain a motion to adopt those minutes as she sent out this, I think it was earlier this morning. Would anyone okay...
 - Commissioner Dawson motioned to approve the minutes from the September 7th and 13th meetings.
 - Commissioner Keener second the motion.
 - Chair Keller asked all in favor of adopting the minutes from September 7th and 13th, please say aye. Any oppose say no.
 - All voted aye, the motion passed. The minutes from September 7th and 13th are adopted.
 - Chair Keller said, thank you very much. I'm going to go ahead and make sure everyone again is aware that any public comments will be taken at the end of the meeting. Each person seeking public comment will have 3 minutes to speak. So please send a message to Tonda, if you do wish to speak, and we will get you set up towards the end of the meeting.
 - b. Introduction of members present - Jason Keller, Chair, Energy Transition Workforce Commission
 - Chair Keller said went on to say I do want to real quick allow Commissioners to introduce themselves and the different constituencies that they represent, so that those from the general public have an idea of who we are. I'll go ahead and start in the room first, and then I'll go to those on the web webinar, so if you wouldn't mind. Go ahead and start.
 - Commissioners Dawson, Keener, Chair Keller, Doshi, Cerruti, Etchason, and Director Richards, and Morrison gave brief introductions.
 - Chair Keller said thank you so much and okay, I don't believe there were any other commissioners just making one last call. It's hard for me to look and see all the boxes, but I think everyone introduced themselves.
- II. Commission presentation on data analysis
- Chair Keller said Tonda, I would like to share my screen, if possible. I might need. There we go. I'm going to go into the presentation of what we've learned as a commission so far, I will try not to board everyone too much.
 - Chair Keller started his presentation at minute mark 09:03 on slide one.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide two at minute mark 09:21.

- Chair Keller moved to slide three at minute mark 10:01.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide four at minute mark 10:38.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide five at minute mark 11:33. Also, said I do want to stop and real quick give full credit to Dr. Ken Kriz from the University of Illinois, Springfield. He did a fantastic job under some pressure to come up with some of these statistics so I want to give him full credit for the work he did.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide six at minute mark 12:19. Said that's very tiny so I'll try to say this a little bit slowly.
 - Person in the audience was inaudible.
 - Chair Keller said thank you. I'll try to admit him. There we go. Thank you for pointing that out.
 - Chair Keller moved on to slide seven at minute mark 14:05.
 - Person in the audience was inaudible again.
 - Chair Keller said oh, all right, see if I can admit him, there we go.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide eight at minute mark 15:40.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide nine at minute mark 16:33.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide ten at minute mark 16:44.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide eleven at minute mark 17:01.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide twelve at minute mark 17:34.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide thirteen at minute mark 18:15.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide fourteen at minute mark 20:08.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide fifteen at minute mark 21:00.
 - Chair Keller moved to slide sixteen (last slide of presentation with his contact information) at minute mark 21:52.
 - Chair Keller said so, I'll say, thank you for sitting through that presentation. I know it's not the most exciting. But we wanted to deliver the information that we have found through our analysis. My phone number, my email are listed here. If you have follow up questions after this meeting, I welcome them. Certainly, welcome any suggestions as well on how to improve the presentation or any other. So, with that I'm going to go ahead and close my sharing of the PowerPoint here. Bear with me one second.
 - Chair Keller asked if there are any members, any commission members wishing to speak, following that presentation, or want to add any of their insights from the presentation.
 - Director Kristin Richards said I'm just happy to hear that the next phase of analysis Jason will include supply chain impact. It's obviously something is of particular importance to the Department of Commerce and looking forward to seeing the outcome of that study.
 - Chair Keller said great. I appreciate that. Thank you. Any other comments from commission members before we go to public comment.
- III. Marion Regional events
- Chair Keller mentioned the future regional visits in his presentation at minute mark 21:27 (slide fifteen).
- IV. Public Comment
- Chair Keller okay, with that I've had one person reach out to me, but hopefully there, there may be more individuals seeking public comment. But I do want to start with Reverend Tony Pierce, who reached out to me and asked to provide public comment today; he is here present, so I am going to minimize my screen here. He should be coming up to the podium, and you'll see him on camera.
 - Reverend Tony Pierce said thank you. I'm a member of the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition (ICJC). I'm the Illinois People's Action, IPA board President. The Heavens View Christian Fellowship Church of Peoria, co-paster and the Heavens View Community Development Corp, nonprofit, CEO and President. My email is tv Pierce@comcast.net and my cell phone number is (309) 303-3398. With those identifying remarks, I'll begin my presentation. I thank you, 2023 Energy Transition Workforce Commission public hearing

members for this opportunity to speak to you. I also thank Governor Pritzker and his Administration, Illinois State Senator Dave Koehler, Illinois Representative Jehan Gordon Booth, other Illinois politicians, and the Illinois Clean Jobs coalition (ICJC) for their contributions in the passage of CEJA to regulate the implementation of green energy in Illinois. As most of us are aware, before the passage of CEJA a government court approved settlement mandated the closure of the E.D. Edwards coal-fired utility plant outside of Peoria. With that closure, public grants that were funded by the fines accumulated by the Edwards plant were awarded to community groups to assist in the transition of displaced workers from the Edwards plant and to aid area communities that have been harmed by the toxins that were produced during the plant's operation. Per the city of Peoria's 2022 annual report there are significant socioeconomic disparities between blacks and whites in Peoria and these disparities seemed to be significantly impacted by the geographical primary locations of blacks and whites throughout the city. For example, blacks are most highly concentrated in the city's southern 61605 zip code, which is the second poorest zip code in Illinois and the zip code nearest to the E.D. Edwards plant. While whites are most concentrated in northern areas of the city furthest away from the Edwards plant. The average black person's life expectancy in Peoria is 64 years, while the average white person's life expectancy is 79 years. And these mortality and health issues are certainly more impacted by the proximity of blacks to the Edwards plant as opposed to the proximity of whites. Furthermore, black poverty in Peoria is four times as high as white poverty with black unemployment being three times higher than white unemployment black median household income being less than half the head of white median household income and black home ownership rates being less than half of that of white home ownership rates. Although the green energy economy offers significant opportunity to positively impact the socio-economic plight of blacks and other black, indigenous, and people of color, or BIPOC in Peoria and throughout Illinois. At present this projected positive impact has not yet materialized. That's because, although BIPOCs represent 40% of the Illinois demographic, BIPOC contractors, including blacks, received less than 2% of the contracting revenues under FEJA that preceded CEJA, and this seems to be confirmed by the electricians' local union IBEW 34, since it's PBS News hour Peoria Regional advertisements only show white people as electricians in it's ads. But in spite of the socio-economic history of blacks and BIPOC in the Peoria area until now, CEJA presents fresh opportunity to change the status of blacks and BIPOC in our area and region in the future. That's because our Heavens View Community Development Corp nonprofit was selected as the lead nonprofit entity to formulate and implement the I-74 corridor workforce job training hub that will serve Peoria, Bloomington, Normal and Galesburg. And in doing so we have an equity focus that will place a priority on the training and employment assistance to see that it results in training and employment that is closer to the BIPOC demographic of 40% than the previous less than 2% attained under FEJA, for BIPOCs, and all of the community colleges and nonprofits that are partnering with us in our I-74 corridor workforce training hub proposal are working with us toward achieving that 40% equity goal that we have all collectively adopted. Thank you.

- Chair Keller said thank you very much for your comments. Are there any others in attendance in person wishing to speak? If you could. If you don't mind, just because of mics up here, if you could. If you can. Please state your name.
- Denise Moore said I know what's accord to me. Good evening. Thank you. I just have a question. But I'll go through the protocol. I am the founder, and CEO of the Minority Business Development Center here in Peoria, the Black Business Alliance, and WPNV 106.3 FM Radio. Thank you for the commercial. My email address is dmoore@mbdcillinois.org. My cell phone number is (309) 573-1134 and my question is much shorter than that. I just wondered if the report was going to be able to be found somewhere online, that's all. Thank you.

- Chair Keller said it was easy. Sorry to make come up off for all that. Yes, the Commission has a website where the phase I report is posted. Once the phase II report is completed, we will post it there. We do anticipate everything wrapping up by the end of the year.
- Person in the audience asked so, is there a way I can just google Energy Transition Workforce Commission?
- Chair Keller said yeah, I can list it off. Because I believe I have that up.
- Person in the audience was inaudible...
- Chair Keller said yeah I'll read it off so it's in the minutes. So, the Energy Transition Workforce Commission is dceo.illinois.gov/events/energytransitionworkforcecommission.html. So, there it is.
- Chair Keller said there is another individual.
- Commissioner Doshi said I think in a web link. It's forward slash not backslash.
- Chair Keller said I apologize. Thank you for that correction. Yeah, another Individuals wishing to speak publicly.
- Joyce Blumenshine said thank you very much. Good evening. My email address is joblumen@yahoo.com. My cell phone is (309) 678-1011. Thank you very much to Commissioner Keller, and also all the members here. I just want to stress to you how important your time is that you are here in person in the Metro Peoria area, and you are greatly appreciated for all that you are doing. I've been a longtime volunteer with Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, and still serve and have been their conservation issues lead person. And in that role, my public information is posted on the web, and I also serve as a volunteer with Central Illinois Healthy Community Alliance, and both of those roles are group volunteers. Some are here tonight and others; we have done our best to help see the passage of the Future Energy Jobs Act and the Climate and Energy Transition Job. So, what this is truly critical for our time for the future generations, and I just cannot thank you enough for the essential work you are doing. In my role as part of the Sierra Club I have received calls from a very upset and irate worker at the Havana power plant when that closure was announced and he had seen our environmental efforts as the fault for him to lose a job. He made it clear that he was not scheduled to work the day the company had decided to hold a workers meeting to announce they were closing and so he of course, was torn apart by facing the loss of his job and the fact that he heard about it from a coworker. Now we cannot control what the companies do. I know there are provisions to try to ensure proper notification and other concerns for the workers. But certainly the workers are our number one consideration. And also mentioned earlier, was the Edwards grant with training opportunities - what you all are doing, what the State is trying to do, it'll help immensely, but that impact on the local workers, we are all very sensitive about from my experience with this gentleman. And knowing that others feel that way, we know there's significant issues not being dealt with as this transaction goes forward. So, I wanted to bring that from my personal experience. Another issue that I want to mention is the loss of tax revenue. But I am so encouraged by the fact that even on the energy company's website they are promoting how much more the tax revenues will be from the battery storage projects just in our area, Edwards and Havana, and at Duck Creek in Fulton County. All three pretty close in this area. They will be putting in battery storage which from -- in some places will significantly increase the property tax revenue. Now the gap, of course, between the closures and the new installations is a concern. But you all are really dealing with that; CEJA deals with that. And I want to give a shout out to Prairie Rivers Network, whose staff has diligently worked to bring grant opportunities to the different communities, and I think without the work of the nonprofits to do that, although you have postings, and there's efforts, many areas, especially down in our area, central here and farther south, are not really getting the messaging well enough. So, I just wanted to lift up groups, are never endeavoring to do that, and to get organizations to take advantage of the existing grant opportunities in this interim before all these new tax revenues are in place. I also want to bring forward, you know, from what I've heard of farmers who are challenged with making revenue profits now that

the opportunities for wind energy contracts. That is a guaranteed annual income, the same for some of the solar farms, they call them. So, there are so many benefits and economic gains that are moving forward as we make this transition. I just lift them up, and for the work you are doing, and I just, and the public needs to be more aware of that, because we do face uphill battles in many of our counties who are now getting zoning approvals for these critical things. I have done a lot of work with coal mine permitting in the state level and others. And again, the transition for those workers who are usually hired workers at will. There's no unions. They are in a very most vulnerable position. And so, your work and the work of the State and the governor and the legislature trying to get support for them is key, because these communities, as you well know, rely on those sources of income, but certainly many of those are not as much as was planned. And just wrapping up here our terminology as this issue goes forward is really key. I know we've heard a lot of talk about, you know, natural gas, but I do hope somehow we, as the community of people moving forward, can call it what it is. It's methane. And we can use that term more often because the public, I think, is really for a large part, I'm aware of the environmental impacts of natural gas because it is methane -- even worse pollution than from carbon dioxide. So again, thank you so much for all that you do. I think there is a great future for Illinois and a better future, and as Reverend Pierce mentioned in Peoria, we were faced with huge inequities and air pollution impacts; clearly, the statistics show that the power plants, and the dust from the coal ash are major concerns. So the progress now being made in reducing costs to the general public, to families for asthma and the many, many other health impacts, including the impacts, long term legacy for our area from coal ash are tremendous. I hope all those things will be added to the benefits of the work you are doing and CEJA, thank you very much.

- Chair Keller said thank you very much and thank you for the kind of words as well. Going to call one more time for those in person. There is another individual that would like to speak coming up.
- Andrew Rehn from Prairie Rivers Network said we're a nonprofit located in Champaign-Urbana, and we do a lot of work on energy transition, energy pollution, water, rivers. Big part of working on Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and been working with the Commission and others on making sure this law is implemented well. So and then my email is arehn@prairierivers.org. And my phone number is (708) 305-6810. I want to thank Reverend Pearson, Denise, and Joyce for your comments today; it was a lot of really good comments to follow and so I'll just try to add a little bit to them. Also, Denise, so you got up here, it's clear that you've done radio. You just had the perfect radio voice. So, I wanted to touch on Joyce's talking point about the workers and this is one area where I think it's unfortunate. I think CEJA could have done better on supporting workforce transition. But there are two programs that really stand out to me that I think we need to make sure we're doing right. And one of them is the scholarship program, which you know, doesn't give somebody a job, but it does provide resources to their family one-year scholarship for workers who lose their jobs in fossil fuel transition. And you know, I think we'd be great to hear more about that, to see that getting the story that getting told and understand, you know, if it's being used, and if so, how it's being used and that could go into, you know, I think part of what creating reports on energy transition is going to be is understanding the impacts of CEJA itself as we start to roll out these programs and see them implemented. And that's one that's already up and running. And the other thing that we can do for workers not every fossil job is going to be replaced by a clean energy job, one to one; that's just not how it's going to work. But the hubs are going to be a pathway for displaced energy workers to find new work, they are one of the target audiences of those hubs. And so, you know, as much as we can do to get those hubs up and running strong. Get recruitment going really well: that will be ways that we can support workers with the CEJA programs to the extent that we can with what we have in the bill. I wanted to celebrate one of the parts of CEJA that, I think, is doing excellently is the energy transition community grants. It's come up a few times here, but those are going well, they're out and now I believe that all the phase 2 has now been distributed. So, communities

across State have the money, which is 40 million dollars. And that's just this year and we're going to come up on another year here, in a few months, of applications. And so that's really exciting. It's great to see and I want to encourage to the extent that the Commission can, and DCEO to spread the word and let folks know that the more people in their community that apply for that, the more government entities that apply, the better it's going to be for their community. We saw some instances of communities where one entity gets to decide for everybody else if they're allowed to apply, and that entity didn't share where other communities did. And I think, really explaining that you can bring a lot more money to your community if you just say yes, would be really excellent cause I want to see these grants get used and they're not all, you know. There's it's a 6-year closure gap. Well, it's a 6-year window after a closure. And so some of these communities are going to be coming up on the end of their... When did Edwards... Edwards was last year. Right? I'm looking at Joyce. Yeah, yeah. So, you know that we've got a few years still. But making sure that you know we use, we use that time effectively, and I think spreading the word, there could be really helpful and also assess the those grants in the report, as you're looking at the energy transition, it's part of the energy transition now. So how are those grants doing, where, you know? How are they being used? Actually, I haven't seen full comprehensive reporting on how they're being used. So, if that can be included here, that'd be excellent. And then I want to touch on 2 more things in this actual, the report, you know, you're looking at the environmental concerns and Joyce was talking about this, but it really would be valuable if we're going to be sitting down and writing out all of the impacts of the economic impacts of supply chain loss to understand. Also, the economic impacts of the health and the pollution and there are methodologies for doing this and the USEPA does this all the time when they have to do assessments of their regulation, they have to economic assessments of the regulations and the impacts they'll have. So, understanding the averted air pollution is a really important metric that we'd be looking at now that these coal plants in this case and in this area, a lot of coal plants have closed. And I'll talk about that in a minute. But that's a lot of air pollution not coming out of the smokestack and understanding the benefits that the communities are seeing from that. That's a gain and then also thinking about coal ash, which is unfortunately a source that isn't solved by closing the power plant. It's still there and understanding the impacts to our groundwater to possible drinking water receptacles and really the, you know, what the cost of cleanup will be. And if you are looking at the cost of cleanup, also be sure to report on the jobs that cleanup will create, so that we don't, you know, always only use jobs as a thing to stop pollution cleanup. We can also use jobs as a reason to clean things up. So, that'd be my recommendation, right, urging for the report is to really, you know, use methodologies to monetize to turn those into monetized costs. And then, lastly, just touching on CEJA closures it. It's come up a few times. CEJA actually hasn't closed a power coal fired power plant in the state yet. And it probably won't, except for maybe Dallman and Prairie State; every coal plant has announced closures before the 2030 deadline outside of those two, maybe Marion as well. So, we're not looking at closures caused by CEJA, instead, what we're looking at is closures that the bill wanted to make sure it still supported those communities that these communities weren't left behind when the power plants were closed. And so, even though the Vistra closed those power plants, the bill came in and is doing its best to support those communities. So just wanted that to be reflected in, when you talk about, you know what has CEJA to closed? And the answer, so far is nothing. And you know, that's the reality of it. And it puts us on a planned transition. So that's my, that's all my comments. Thank you for taking time, I know this is a bit long and I appreciate you all coming down and visiting us here in person. And thanks to all the Commissioners for joining the call.

- Chair Keller said thank you very much, Andrew and I do. While he's top of mind here. Want to say thank you to Andrew and his cohort Amanda Pankau with Prairie Rivers Network. They've been very helpful in promoting these events in the regions that we are going to. So, I'm going to publicly say, thank you. I just want to remind people, if you do on the Webex wish to provide public testimony. Please send a message

to Tonda Reece and let her know that you are wanting to testify. I'm going to call one more time here in person. Is anyone seeking to testify further? If not, then we will go to the Webex (Zoom) and see if anyone is wishing to provide testimony there.

- Tonda (UIS) said yes chair, there is one person Clint Drury would like to give a public comment.
- Chair Keller said okay, Mr. Drury, would you please proceed.
- Clint Drury said yes, sir, good evening. Appreciate your time. I found your presentation Assistant Director fascinating, not boring. So just for the, I want that put in the record. And it's good to hear your voice, Director Richards, it's been a couple of months. Again, I'm Clint Drury. I'm the Executive Director of the West Central Building trades. I represent 17,000 union construction workers. and approximately 300 partner contractors in Central Illinois, you know Peoria MSA, all the way down to Quincy, Duck Creek, Havana, Edwards Station, and Powerton in Pekin, all in my area. So, I don't represent the in-house workers; I represent the tradesmen and women that perform the work at the outages; have done that myself. So, you know, hundreds of good paying jobs, head-of- household jobs, insurance, retirement were drastically reduced due to the closures. And I'm with you. I've met with Vistra many times over the years. Vistra decided to close those plants. But you know, that's sort of the missing piece, it, these are, you know, the outages are usually in the spring and the fall; over the last 6, 8 years those outages have been maybe once a year, and instead of 3 months they're a month, 6 weeks. So, you know that does hurt, you know, we've had some trouble in the beginning in FEJA. with some, you know, out of state developers, contractors, and you know, our folks, our contractors, did not get the whole amount of the work, but that's changed under CEJA. You know, I would respectfully request anything that the commission can do to ensure that those transition jobs be equivalent to those provided in the coal fired power plant. I can't talk either, Jason. My opinion, too, is that you know, they should reflect the communities in which they're located, be sustainable local work force, you know. That's the life blood of our community: our membership, and our contractors. So, I again, I appreciate the opportunity to address the Commission and appreciate all that you're doing.
- Chair Keller said thank you very much for your comments. Tonda is there anyone else seeking public testimony?
- Tonda (UIS) said no. But believe. Michelle mentioned that if you needed to help find a location in Marion let her know,
- Chair Keller said I appreciate that. I we may. I am going to shift my focus to the Marion meeting here after this one. So, Michelle, I will reach out to you and take you up on that offer. I'm going to call one more time, either in person or on the Webex (Zoom) for any public testimony. I am hearing none, so we will go ahead and close that out again.
- Chair Keller said thank you very much for your comments. I'll ask again, Tonda are there any other individuals seeking public testimony on the Zoom call. Again, I want to remind those here in person on the Webex (Zoom) and Commissioners. That we will be meeting in Marion, our next meeting is November ninth and that we have yet to determine the location, but we will get that out to you very quickly. So, I do want to publicly again thank Andrew for your help for promoting and Commissioners for also promoting the event. And I know you guys send it out to multiple organizations and people. So, I wanted to say, thank you very much and then also just thank the legislators for promoting it in this area as well. So, with that, I am going to ask if there's any, I'll ask one more time from commission members if there's any comments that they wish to make.

V. Adjournment

- Chair Keller said I am hearing none, then I would entertain a motion to adjourn.
- Commissioner Dawson motioned to adjourn.
- Chari Keller asked is there a second?
- Commissioner Keener seconded the motion.

- Chair Keller said all in favor please say aye.
- All voted aye, the motion passed.
- The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 pm.

- Future meeting dates
 - November 9th at 6 pm- Marion
 - December 6th at 11 am

Minutes submitted by: Tonda Reece, UIS on 10/27/2023

Materials:

- I. 10/18 meeting audio [Energy Transition Workforce Meeting 10/18-Zoom](#)
- II. Energy Transition Workforce Commission PowerPoint presentation