



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Hydrogen Economy Task Force

March 11, 2025

8:30 am to 10:00 am

Minutes

Location: Virtual WebEx Video Conference

Meeting link: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=md6e33ca900751789ac756b156d3e331c>

Meeting number: 2865 397 7484

Password: bzDFv9S5NP3

Join by video system:

Dial [28653977484@illinois.webex.com](tel:28653977484)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

Join by phone:

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+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Access code: 2865 397 7484

Minutes:

I. Call to Order at 8:32 am.

II. Roll Call of Membership

Rep. Terra Costa Howard: Yes

Sarah Duffy: Yes

Patrick Evans: Yes

Rep. Bradley Fritts: Yes

Jim Hoyt: Yes

Dan LeFevers: Yes

Carly McCrory-McKay: No

Chad Parker: No

Laura Roche: Yes

Dr. Petros Sofronis: Yes

Michael Wang: Yes

Carrie Schoenberger: Yes

Patrick Devaney: Yes

Sen. Laura Ellman: No

Kyle Freeman: Yes

Jon Horek: No

Elizabeth Irvin: No

George Letavish: Yes

Dulce Ortiz: Yes

Sen. Sue Rezin: Yes

Doug Scott: Yes

Catherine Stashak: No

Dana Wynn: Yes

III. Approval of February 11, 2025, Minutes

Senator Sue Rezin motioned to accept the minutes from January 14, 2025. Doug Scott seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Chair Report

Representative Tara Costa-Howard mentioned that there was no chair report at this time.

V. Old Business

Representative Tara Costa-Howard mentioned that the only old business was the task force report.

VI. Task Force Administrative Business

- Annual Report (Vote to be taken)

Representative Tara Costa-Howard asked for a motion to accept the annual report.

Dan LeFevers asked, are there changes allowed to the report or are we approving it as it was sent out?

Representative Tara Costa-Howard answered the plan was to make a motion, to approve it, get a second and then have discussion. I know there is a potential amendment that needs to be added. I am not sure if you all want to have a discussion and then vote as a totality? We can motion amend the original motion to include additional things because I know we need to turn in this report. Does that work? Aaron, am I good with that?

Aaron McEvoy deferred this to the legal staff Kate Exo on how to proceed with this.

Kate Exo replied that was sort of how we figured this would work would be a motion to approve and then you could either vote NO and then approve, then make another motion to amend it accordingly or a motion to amend tradeoffs. So, either way, but the way you described that is, that is perfectly acceptable.

Representative Tara Costa-Howard said it would be easiest if we make a motion to approve, as written and then we can add an amendment to the original motion, and we will put the language on the screen and that way everybody can have a say as to if that amendment works and we will vote on each amendment as we go along. Does that work for everyone?

Pat Devaney motioned to accept the annual report. Doug Scott second.

Discussion stated for the amendments of the report.

Amendment 1: Pat Devaney motioned to amend the report by adding the language that is being projected in the screen sharing to be added to the annual report. Doug Scott second. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Addition to annual report: CEJA also established the [Illinois Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship program](#). The Illinois Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship program recruits, prescreens, and provides pre-apprenticeship skills training for which participants can attend free of charge and receive a stipend to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in the construction and building trades and clean energy job opportunities. The Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship program recruits candidates from underrepresented populations and areas identified as Environmental Justice Communities. Upon completion of the program,

participants will be connected to and prepared to complete apprenticeship programs in the construction and building trades. This Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program provides candidates financial support through the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program. Barrier reduction services include funding for stipends, childcare, transportation, driver's education fees, textbooks, tools, and other upfront costs associated with joining an apprenticeship program.

Pat Devaney added that he submitted this language when we received the previous draft, and I had raised it in a meeting and there was no objection to adding it. It is simply, there were two different workforce development programs in CEJA. The climate jobs workforce training program with the 13 hubs is already name checked and described in the draft. We just needed to add the climate works pre-apprentice program to also talk about workforce training that we could also tap into for hydrogen development and the hydrogen economy jobs. So, again there was previously no objection to it. It was just I think it inadvertently omitted and finishing this draft. So that is what that accomplishes.

The motion and second were put to a vote and passed unanimously by voice vote to accept Amendment 1 to be added to the report.

Amendment 2: Dan LeFevers motioned to include the minor edit and accuracy suggestions to the annual report. Pat Devaney second.

Edit 1: page 15: Transportation and Storage: One of the major constraints on increasing hydrogen production is the ~~problem~~ **issue** of transporting and storing the gas.

At present, in Illinois, most hydrogen currently produced is used on-site **and in the nation is produced near the end-user or moved through a 1200 mile pipeline in the gulf-coast to a variety of fuel and chemical producers.**

Edit 2: page 33: CEJA and hydrogen: The Act includes very significant public and private investments in workforce training, with an emphasis on supporting workers who live in ~~underresourced~~ **under resourced** communities or who have lost jobs in the fossil fuels industry.

Edit 3: page 40: Task Force Recommendations: Establishing a well-regarded annual hydrogen conference in Chicago would make a strong statement about Illinois' leadership in this growing industry**.**

The motion and the second were put to a vote and passed unanimously by voice vote to accept Amendment 2 of small changes for accuracy within the report.

Michael Wang commented saying no discussion but just to support what he added earlier is actually correct and precise.

Dr. Petros Sofronis mentioned that on page 26 of the report, it says that "the MTD which retired its last conventional diesel powered buses in 2023." This is not an accurate statement. The diesel buses are still out there. There are only twelve hydrogen fueled buses here out of the 118. Nearly there is a plan within the MTD for replacement of these diesel buses, but right

now we only have twelve. In other words, diesel buses are running around here at our university campus. So, this statement needs to be corrected here. And I have a general comment about the section on fueling heavy duty vehicles. If you read this section and if you are an Illinois legislator the projection here is that it is very difficult to go with heavy duty tracking with hydrogen. It is mainly focused on obstacles and roadblock roadblocks. So, in other words, the connotation out of that is that this sector of the hydrogen economy is something that is expensive, the infrastructure is missing, and it is very difficult to go. On the other hand, for instance, Champaign Urbana MTD is mentioned very positively. I am saying this because if Champaign Urbana had adopted the same viewpoint, the same angle, forward the mass district transportation here, right? We would not have MTD here in Champaign Urbana running twelve hydrogen buses. So, this is what I would like to draw attention here to the task force that there is a little bit I personally view it as not as positive perhaps on the negative side with the comparisons that I made, with the costs et cetera. I am not making a motion. I am just drawing attention, how this might be viewed by the legislator or by the governor's office. Perhaps this is my personal opinion here and we do not need to change the section here. I'm just drawing attention on the way I have read it that specific section. Went on to say that is inaccurate in the last paragraph on page 26, because we have not replaced the diesel buses by hydrogen fuel buses here in Champaign. There are only twelve buses. This link here which retires its last conventional diesel power buses in 2023. The buses around here you can see that there are only twelve buses that are hydrogen fuel.

Aaron McEvoy asked if the link was removed, would rectify the concern?

Sarah Duffy added that he wants the language changed. He is saying the link is not accurate that they have retired their last conventional buses.

Petros Sofronis suggested that instead of the language in the report that it be changed to say, "the MTD has twelve hydrogen fueled buses."

Amendment 3: Petros Sofronis motioned that the link in the last paragraph on page 26 be removed and/or changed for accuracy. Pat Devaney second.

Edit 1: page 26, paragraph 2; sentence 1: The MTD, ~~which retired its last conventional diesel powered buses in 2023~~, has offered to serve as a technical resource for other Illinois agencies considering conversion to hydrogen-power buses.

Sarah Duffy said I do not know. I, maybe not Nay, but if you actually follow the link and go to the article, that is a direct quote from MTD and that the rest of the remaining buses are hybrid and they're not conventional diesel buses.

Dan LeFevers added that it is the word conventional they are leaning on in the article. So, they are saying they have retired their last conventional diesel powered bus. Maybe, does that make sense Petros that maybe that is what happened here?

Petros Sofronis said I do not think so, the last time I met with them they did have diesel buses. They were I think just diesel buses. But I can call them up and verify this.

Sarah Duffy said, I am looking at the press release on the MTD website that is linked here, and

that statement is pretty much verbatim in there.

Patrick Evans added that MTD has stated publicly that they operate hybrid buses predominantly and that they do not have any conventional diesel. I am from the Urbana Champagne area, so that is their public position, that may be inaccurate, but we should confirm it. Their commitment is to phase out fossil fuel by 2038.

Representative Tara Costa-Howard said we would be remiss if we amended it by removing that language if we, if we do not have a full-on confirmation from MTD. Is that fair?

Petros Sofronis said yes, I can call MTD and find out from them directly.

The vote for the motion and second for Amendment 3 were put on hold for clarification of the language. Once clarified the Chair will make the decision, rather the wording should be removed or changed to best fit the report.

Amendment 4: Sarah Duffy motioned to add at the end of the second sentence on page 34 to read as “that receive incentives through programs run by Illinois power agencies”. Pat Devaney second.

Sarah Duffy added that in the Labor Standards section on page 34, in the 2nd paragraph. That it should be corrected that these requirements apply to projects that receive rec incentives from the Illinois power agency, not on all utility scale wind and solar projects. And not on all non-residential wind and solar projects. Companies can build projects outside of our programs and then they are not held to these labor standards.

Pat Devaney added that what she said was an accurate statement. The only way you can require those labor standards is if they are recs that are procured or awarded through the IPA.

Edit 1: page 34, paragraph 2: Labor standards: CEJA includes several provisions designed to protect wage levels for clean energy workers. It requires project labor agreements on all utility-scale wind and solar projects and prevailing wage on all non-residential wind and solar projects (except for projects up to 100 kw on houses of worship), **that receive incentives through programs run by Illinois power agencies.**

The motion and second for Amendment 4 were put to a vote and passed unanimously by voice vote to accept the added language to the report.

The motion and second for approving the report and amendments 1, 2 and 4 as presented and voted on today were put to a vote and passed unanimously by voice vote to accept the changes to the report.

VII. CY25 meeting topics discussion

Dana Wynn said she had a suggestion for possibly one of the meeting topics this year that I did not bring up at the last meeting and I would like to definitely bring in some more, especially because I am on this committee and we need to have some more input from environmental justice groups. That is some outreach that I am definitely willing to kind of do. I

know here in East St. Louis we have the United Congregations of the Metro East. I believe that they have some involvement with the one of the CEJA workforce hubs, and I was in the environmental Justice Academy with the USCPA region five that was down here in East St. Louis in 2024. So, I am happy to reach out to that group, to see if they would like to come on and be a part of the task force meeting. I know that is just something that is local here in this Metro East area Southern Illinois, but they have a lot of contacts throughout Southern Illinois and kind of like up to the Springfield area. So, and then I know that a lot of you all are in more of the Chicago Land area, so if you guys would have suggest other suggestions of environmental groups there, my local suggestion is definitely to reach out to some of those environmental justice groups that are actually like boots on the ground doing some of this work because that is what we definitely need some more input from them, I feel.

Pat Devaney added that having an update from the hub would definitely be something that would be useful giving all the uncertainty and chaos that is happening in DC. If they can provide any insight into as to what they are hearing, that would probably be beneficial to the group.

Dan LeFevers added that they have an open invitation, they are on the agenda, that is a standing agenda item.

Sarah Duffy added that she was thinking of putting this out there as a meeting topic, not just updates from them on like the funding but also if their work is continuing on the community engagement piece, just getting some more information. I think the last time we spoke to them they had mentioned plans for town halls and like kind of the things that were in the future. I think having updates on any specific activities that have taken place or specific things that are planned would be helpful.

VIII. Task Force Members information share
Dan LeFevers shared about MachH2. See below.

IX. MachH2 News
Dan LeFevers said, the MachH2 hub does have a meeting with the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations, this week. So, I think we will have some more updates about what's going on with MachH2. I will be participating in that meeting. When is the next Illinois Hydrogen Task Force meeting?

Aaron McEvoy said May 13th.

Dan LeFevers said there should be a lot of updates surrounding the Hubs by then. And there will be a lot more certainty around what the current administration is requiring or not requiring and other issues. I mean reconciliation may be done and we will know if 45V is still

there or not. So, there may be a lot of knowledge available at that point. So, I think if you reach out to Dorothy, she will be happy to provide an update at that meeting.

X. Audience Comment Period

There were no audience comments at this time.

XI. Adjournment

The adjournment of the meeting was motioned by Laura Roche. Second by Brad Fritts at 9:11 am.

Upcoming meetings:

- May 13, 2025 at 8:30 am
- July 15, 2025 at 8:30 am
- September 16, 2025 at 8:30 am
- November 18, 2025 at 8:30 am