



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Hydrogen Economy Task Force

September 16, 2025

8:30 am to 10:00 am

Minutes

Location: Virtual WebEx Video Conference

Meeting link: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=mb3d6097663d911ba100d4f4edb58b7b>

Meeting number: 2870 635 4992

Password: PZcs7wRUJ57

Join by video system:

Dial [28677087635@illinois.webex.com](tel:28677087635)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

Join by phone:

+312-535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Access code: 2870 635 4992

Minutes:

I. Call to Order at 8:33 am.

II. Roll Call of Membership

Rep. Terra Costa Howard: No

Sarah Duffy: Yes

Patrick Evans: No

Rep. Bradley Fritts: No

Jim Hoyt: Yes

Dan LeFevers: No

Dan McManus: Yes

Dulce Ortiz: No

Chad Parker: Yes

Laura Roche: Yes

Dr. Petros Sofronis: Yes

Dr. Michael Wang: Yes

Patrick Devaney: No

Sen. Laura Ellman: Yes

Kyle Freeman: Yes

Jon Horek: No

Elizabeth Irvin: Yes

George Letavish: No

Carly McCrory-McKay: No

Carrie Schoenberger: Yes

Sen. Sue Rezin: No

Doug Scott: Yes

Catherine Stashak: Yes

Dana Wynn: Yes

III. Approval of May 13, 2025, Minutes

Catherine Stashak motioned to accept the minutes from May 13, 2025, with the spelling corrections included. Dr. Petros seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Chair Report

Chair Ellman reported the following.

- Participated on a two-day panel (September 3rd-4th) called the Hydrogen Summit of the Americas in DC.
- The common theme there was the uncertainty around federal funding for hydrogen.
 - Federal dollar cutbacks and how there are opportunities in other areas there could be state incentives.
 - There may be a need to pivot to a more economic model
 - Geologic hydrogen was a topic. Talks about how hydrogen exists underground and that can potentially be drilled and pumped above ground like natural gas and oil has been done.
 - For areas with reduced or paused funding for hydrogen hubs it is suggested to pivot to a different model to incentivize or develop or attract hydrogen in this industry.
- It would be good idea to host an Illinois or regional summit about hydrogen and getting potential investors or stakeholders to share information and generate interest on investment in hydrogen in Illinois.
- Participating in a USHA policy leaders' summit, their sessions geared towards state legislators. Information was shared on potential markets for hydrogen such as trucking, local transportation, and fleet operations. Also looked at if there is any legislation or standards on locating or siting of fueling stations that include the word "hydrogen". This is so potential investors do not run into a grey area when it comes to permits or sighting for future hydrogen or refueling. Starting small with hydrogen supply and hydrogen offtake to start together, using that to grow demand and supply.

V. Old Business

There was no old business at this time.

VI. Task Force Administrative Business

Aaron McEvoy mentioned the annual report that is due December 1st and would like to meet the deadline. Also, if there are any task force members that are interested in taking part in writing the report, then no more than six members would be needed to avoid violating the Open Meetings Act.

VII. MachH2 News

Aaron McEvoy reported that no one from the MachH2 team was able to be on the call but they did send a message saying, "they continue to wait for direction on the future of the MachH2 hub programs from the US Department of Energy and will provide more information to Chair Ellman when they have more to share."

VIII. Task Force Members information share

Dana Wynn shared

- She attended SIUE's open house at the Wedge, which is a new co-working space.
- Spoke with Dean Mario Hiyak (Dean of Business School at SIUE) asked him if he was

- familiar with business finance, markets and transport and clean energy developments?
- Dean Hiyak brought up SIUEs connection with the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center (NCERC)
 - In the Illinois community college system, College of DuPage's President, Muddassir Siddiqi, also comes from the Texas community college system, and who could provide a voice and perspective from that lens if invites to speak at a future task force meeting.
 - University and community college local outreach opportunities within an hour from SIUE & East St. Louis Higher Education campuses in industries documented throughout the task force reports as high impact applications and measurable benefits of hydrogen technology adoption:
 - ConocoPhillips Refinery in Hartford
 - Alton Steel, Inc.
 - BayoTech in Chesterfield/Wentzville
 - Other heavy-duty industrial operations
- Attended the Southern Illinois Clean Energy Summit in Carterville to discuss some of the clean energy development and news related to what is happening with CEJA.
- ICCB is working with clean energy through the Rev Up EV initiative. They are also on pause through their I-Tax and everything with federal funding.
- Since federal funding is on pause asked where we can look to pivot to utilize our partnerships and collaborative opportunities and potential between the university system?
- Sustainable aviation fuel was mentioned and said that this should be considered in the overall lens of hydrogen economy development and how it may branch off into other developments that come from the same investment but from a private investor.
- Related to finances and investment and limitations on permits and sightings there are ways to fast track the processes used in other states.
- Cities and communities will be able to adopt ordinances that might be environmental justice consideration that can be part of the fast track.

Dr. Petros shared

- This summer worked on whether and how Illinois can actually pivot to a hydrogen economy for the state and the mid-west.
- On September 12 there was a meeting in U of I in Champaign-Urbana where Senator Duckworth visited the Illinois Fermentation and Agriculture Biomanufacturing Hub (iFAB), that is funded by the Department of Energy. Along with Senator Duckworth there were leaders from the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology. This is mentioned because hydrogen and its applications can be viewed in the boarder nexus of interactions of hydrogen with Biofuels, Biotechs and CO2 utilization technologies. Such examples of the importance of hydrogen in a number of prospective industries interested in investing in Illinois are:
 - A fermentation company that approached the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur-Macon County. The company wants to invest in our state, and it needs three thousand tons of hydrogen per year, so there is local demand for hydrogen.
 - Adkins Energy in Lena, Illinois, an ethanol production company, is working on developing a demonstration project for e-methanol production. CO2 produced in ethanol plants can be used to produce e-methanol when green hydrogen is

available. This offers an opportunity for the creation of new market through utilizing CO2 captured at such plants. It should be mentioned that there are 11 ethanol plants in Illinois and methanol is the fuel the maritime is considering for the decarbonization of its operations.

- There is demand for hydrogen and there are industries in our state that are interested in hydrogen, but we do not have hydrogen.
- The task force needs to suggest that there is opportunity out there for the state to pivot towards the hydrogen/-biofuels/-biotech nexus.
- The state has 11 ethanol plants; those plants produce CO2. As CO2 can be used to produce methanol it can be used to produce fertilizers. In other words, we can also pivot to the agricultural component of our state.
 - We can use CO2 to produce methanol and other products instead of sequestering underground.
 - We need hydrogen production and hydrogen utilization projects but without one you cannot have the other.
- Had a meeting with Dr. Jack Brouwer from the California Hydrogen Hub (ARCHES), and the University of California, Irvine. Dr. Brouwer stated that their hydrogen hub is moving forward and are working in connecting supply and demand at the LA and Long Beach ports through infrastructure development.
 - Mentioned health benefits from hydrogen deployment are important regardless of whether green or gray hydrogen is used to decarbonize polluted areas such as the Chicago port.
 - He also mentioned that replacement of diesel is the highest value that we can get by adopting hydrogen, e.g. in trucking.
 - Illinois needs to engage with those from California about what they went through since a year ago when dealing with hydrogen developments on how to make progress in Illinois.
- Bill Elrick from the H@FCP said that the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Partnership is developing a Mobility Vision & Roadmap for a scaled rollout of hydrogen mobility.
- There are opportunities that the state can capitalize on for a state-centric hydrogen economy.

Michael Wang shared

- About the budget for the DOE Hydrogen Fuel Cell and Technology Office: the Administration's request is about \$50 million for FY2026 in comparison above \$200 million a year budget in FY25 and before, so this is a significant reduction. Now congress is working on what they want to propose for the DOE hydrogen program budget.
- 45V timeline is past 2027 that in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)

Sarah Duffy said to make sure not to overlook health benefits with decarbonization if there are any health benefits to switching to any type of hydrogen in a highly polluted area. That is

good news and that is a good reason to explore and building up the infrastructure for using hydrogen generally, before green hydrogen is there economically. Moving to gray hydrogen would not be a decarbonization effort but it might still have those health benefits as co-benefits.

Dr. Petros Sofronis added that in exploring the chair's suggested summit for stakeholders he would pitch this to his university, UIUC, to see if the U of I system would be willing to help organize the event.

Dana Wynn added for those in southern Illinois that want to participate in the summit but cannot travel to Chicago consider creating a live stream option for additional participation.

IX. Audience Comment Period

There were no audience comments at this time.

X. Adjournment

The adjournment of the meeting was motioned by Dr. Petros Sofronis and second by Sarah Duffy at 9:14 am. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Upcoming meetings:

- November 18, 2025, at 8:30 am