



Make The Capital Bill Work For Our Economy and Environment

Put Illinois Back To Work For A Cleaner, Healthier, More Prosperous Future

Illinois leaders have a major opportunity this Spring to not only create jobs in the near future, but to also create lasting benefits that will make Illinois cleaner, greener, healthier, and better positioned to profit in the new energy economy of the future. By incorporating energy and environmental investments into the larger state public works plan under consideration in Springfield, lawmakers can make sure that our tax dollars deliver a brighter future for us all.

Here are five key areas where public investment today will pay dividends tomorrow, and for generations to come:

CLEAN ENERGY - Make Illinois A Winner In the New Energy Economy

Illinois is well positioned to benefit from the growth of the renewable energy industry, particularly wind power. Building and operating wind turbines creates high-wage jobs in manufacturing and construction industries, and steady income for farmers who host projects. Energy efficiency projects employ a wide variety of building trades professionals, and save homeowners, renters, businesses, and local governments big dollars on energy costs. Investing in clean energy solutions also gives us healthier air to breathe, and makes major cuts in the pollution causing global warming.

Examples of clean energy investments that make sense for Illinois are:

- A revolving loan fund for renewable energy and efficiency projects, to help finance public and private investments in clean energy
- Grants to school districts to renovate old schools to save energy and cut costs
- Grants to local governments to help implement climate action plans, and cut pollution at the local level
- Workforce development programs to prepare workers for high-wage jobs in the clean energy economy
- New funding to expand new utility-funded energy efficiency programs

CLEAN WATER - Provide Safe, Clean Drinking Water

According to the Illinois EPA, Illinois has over 300 rivers, lakes, and streams that do not meet safe water quality standards. Investments in wastewater treatment, drinking water safety, and in protecting and restoring the natural systems that protect our water supply not only create jobs but also ensure safe drinking water supplies for the future.

Funds are needed to:

- Fund clean water measures that IEPA has approved for polluted waters, but for which there has been no funding

- Support local governments who are planning the next generation of clean water safeguards, including pollution controls for nutrients, and collection and treatment to keep pharmaceuticals out of our waters
- Removal and repair of dams that pose safety hazards to river users
- Disinfection of the Chicago River system, to protect the many recreational users of the Chicago River and Cal-Sag Channel from bacteria and pathogens
- Protection and restoration of “green infrastructure” - wetlands and stream corridors that filter out pollution and protect communities from flooding

TOXIC WASTE - Clean Up Toxic Sites In Our Communities

All over Illinois, thousands of brownfields and leaking underground storage tank sites are impeding economic development and posing health and safety risks to neighbors.

To turn these dangerous eyesores into assets, funding is needed for Illinois EPA to:

- Remediate brownfields in cooperation with local governments
- Assist owners of leaking underground storage tank sites with excavation and cleanup

OPEN SPACE - Protect Open Space

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources needs at least \$2 billion to protect Illinois places that are important for outdoor recreation and preserving Illinois’ natural heritage. Traditionally, these funds have come from large capital investment programs, such as Illinois FIRST or Build Illinois. These recent programs have set aside 1-2% of the overall program for open space protection, and this year’s capital program should do the same.

TRANSIT - Invest in Transportation Options For Suburbs, Cities, and Rural Areas

Maintaining and expanding transit service creates construction and maintenance jobs, and gives Illinoisans transportation options that save fuel costs and reduce congestion and pollution. Illinois FIRST funded transit at a 1:2 ratio to spending on roads and bridges. A similar ratio in this year’s capital plan would help ensure the continuation of existing transit service, maintenance work to eliminate safety threats and slow zones, and planning for future expansion.

In addition, Illinois is primed to make a major leap forward in intercity train service. New state investments in track upgrades and train cars can provide faster connections between Illinois cities, and better position Illinois to compete for new federal funds for high speed rail development.

The federal stimulus bill, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, makes important downpayments in several of these areas. However, these funds are not available for many key environmental priorities, and do not meet the total need for any of them. Illinois has a chance to capitalize compound the stimulus effect of these investments by adding its own support for the environmental priorities most critical to our communities and our future.