

*Preferable to incessant utility bailouts...*

# Why We Need “Just-Transitions”

The World is undergoing an energy **transformation** – not transition. This transformation is driven largely by technological advances, and the new Techno-Genies will not be put back into the bottle. Just as blacksmiths and clipper ship sail makers no longer dominate our economy, workers at nuclear and coal plants, and coal and uranium miners face a greatly diminished future, and soon. Transitions are gradual; transformations are not, taking quantum leaps that aren’t always linear. As a result those clinging too tightly to the past get left far behind.

Trying to restrain and restrict the transformational energy technologies is as futile as King Canute commanding the waves of the ocean to recede. The only sensible course of action is simply – **plan ahead!** Plan ahead means:

- Recognizing that transformation is underway, and brings inevitable changes
- Realizing that old tried-and-true jobs and industries – like nuclear and coal plants and mines -- may be entirely replaced, and that new jobs will be available to take their place
- Understanding the inevitable disruptions that the new energy transformation will bring to local tax bases, real estate, and local economies; and **planning ahead** to attract new jobs and economic opportunities **before** the crisis of nuclear and coal plant closure hits.

To date the response from traditional utilities and government has been to unleash an epidemic of “bailouts” to try to prop up uneconomic power plants. The utilities hide behind the threatened suffering of the local communities and workers to pry financial concessions out of elected officials to get “someone else” (usually all the other ratepayers) to pay for their lack of foresight and planning. Legislators, not wanting to lose votes, go along with this. But the truth is simple:

***You cannot create a viable energy future by bailing out the past!***

***“Just Transitions – the viable alternative”:***

It’s the communities that need the bailing out, not the for-profit utilities. A “just transitions” program implemented before the inevitable crisis hits would:

- Protect communities by establishing an escrowed community fund prior to reactor and coal plant closure, to be used when plants close for protecting public services threatened by reduced tax base; for job re-training and new job attraction; and for economic diversification.
- Create tax and interest rate incentives within a local community facing plant closures, available to attract new businesses and residents to locate in affected communities.
- Eliminate the need for corporate utility “bailouts” without end, as utilities with anachronistic business models continue seeking wealth transfers from ratepayers to their shareholders to prop up declining and vanishing industries.

In Illinois **S. 3574, the Energy Transition Zone Act and the Energy Transition Tax Credit Act**, takes the first brave, sensible step toward just transitions. At the federal level, **H.R. 3671 - Off Fossil Fuels for a Better Future Act**, does the same. They both deserve support. Unless you love bailouts.



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