

STATEMENT ON ILLINOIS ENERGY LEGISLATION

by

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Recent news accounts of FBI investigation into potential lobbying irregularities between elected officials and energy company giants Commonwealth Edison and Exelon Corporation are cause for great concern about upcoming major Illinois energy legislation.

The timing of these investigations could not be more inconvenient:

- All indications are that targets for renewable energy procurement to meet the State's goal of 25% renewables by the year 2025 set out in the 2016 Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) are currently inadequate, and the goal likely will be missed.
- Noting the underfunding of FEJA and the absence of new legislation that would fund a much needed expansion of renewable energy sources, renewable energy vendors warn that new Illinois renewable energy construction and procurement will grind to a halt.
- Perhaps wanting to put distance between his administration and the FBI's legislative lobbying irregularity investigations, Gov. Pritzker has stated that major energy legislation is unlikely to be taken up in the Fall veto session, deferring critical decision making to the Spring 2020 session.
- Ongoing negotiations between members of the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition and ComEd/Exelon that have been underway throughout 2019 to create an Illinois-managed electricity "capacity market" ahead of an anticipated Trump Administration FERC ruling that would bail out coal and nuclear plants have been suspended, not only calling into question their ability to actually reach an agreement before FERC acts and new Illinois energy legislation is passed, but given the FBI investigations, whether or not these negotiations have been undertaken "in good faith" to begin with.
- All the while Illinois proceeds in Life in its "imaginary protective energy bubble" without a vitally necessary and future-looking energy *transformation*, the Planet continues to warm to record setting levels that will only worsen the longer we delay implementing a full-on renewable energy/energy efficiency infrastructure.

All of these machinations and political intrigues retain the familiar smell of "business as usual," at a time when Planetary necessity renders these activities and responses increasingly inadequate and inappropriate.

While Einstein warned that you can't solve a problem using the same thinking that got you into the mess to begin with, it is current climate hero Greta Thunberg who advises, "We cannot solve a crisis without treating it like a crisis....And if solutions within 'The System' are so hard to find, then maybe we should change the System itself."

It is high time to change the System that determines energy policy in Illinois. Whether that occurs through necessary legislation, or through FBI indictments, things have to change, and change for good:

- We can no longer allow the implementation of the much-needed 21st Century renewable energy future to be governed by the dictates and likes of ComEd and Exelon, whose lobbying activities now under federal scrutiny have for decades delayed and obstructed that future.
- Holding a “nuclear hostage crisis” every time we attempt to implement new renewable energy is no way to get the job done. Nuclear bailouts like the \$2.3 billion wealth-transfer from ratepayers to Exelon shareholders in 2016 should not be a pre-condition for renewable energy implementation. If Gov. Pritzker and Illinois legislators truly want a renewable energy future, they should take Greta Thunberg’s advice – *change the System and enact one*. Let Illinois ratepayers and taxpayers know who is the tail and who is the dog.
- “Negotiations” of any kind with ComEd and Exelon should be suspended indefinitely, pending the outcome of the FBI investigations.
- Move quickly on separate energy legislation that aggressively implements renewable energy and energy efficiency – separately from nuclear-related issues.
- In separate nuclear-related legislation, especially if Exelon seeks “bailouts” at ratepayer expense, all the liabilities and issues that have been consciously ignored since 2014 during the enactment of FEJA, and now, in development of the current crop of energy legislation should be addressed and solved: radioactive waste generation; “just transitions” for affected reactor communities; reactor decommissioning and inadequate fiscal oversight and lack of transparency of reactor decommissioning funds; defined and mandatory shutdown dates and plans for all reactors, as was negotiated by parties in California for the San Onofre reactor closure.

Thinking that continued use of nuclear power is an effective way of combatting climate disruption is a fool’s errand, at least in the opinion of the former Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Dr. Gregory Jaczko:

“This [nuclear] tech is no longer a viable strategy for dealing with climate change, nor is it a competitive source of power. It is hazardous, expensive and unreliable, and abandoning it wouldn’t bring on climate doom.”

You can’t build an energy future by bailing out the past. If this State, this Governor, this Legislature really want a renewable energy future, then – **enact one!**

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