



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

August 2, 2021

Dear Climate Jobs Illinois,

I am disappointed to hear that you feel you've reached an impasse in climate negotiations with the Clean Jobs Coalition. As I have made clear, the time for climate action is now. Comprehensive, clean, equitable, and ethical energy reform is what the people of this state need and deserve, and the clock is ticking.

In your letter, you requested that I work to reach compromise with stakeholders. That work has been done. As you know, after dozens of working group meetings and hours of discussion and negotiation, my office sent a compromise bill to members and stakeholders on June 10 that reflected discussions in legislative working groups and included agreed upon policies. That compromise bill would phase out coal by 2035 (except Prairie State and City Water Light and Power (CWLP), which could stay open until 2045 with 90% carbon capture) and natural gas by 2045 through declining caps on greenhouse gas emissions, prioritizing equity investment eligible communities and dedicating \$2 million per year in ratepayer funds to fund Prairie State's 2035 decommissioning costs. It also would require prevailing wage on nearly every renewable energy project, with a 5-year exemption for equity eligible contractors, and require project labor agreements on all utility-scale solar and wind projects. Importantly, the compromise bill also contains robust ethics provisions, a new performance-based ratemaking system that would create thousands of jobs, and critical workforce and clean transportation provisions that would create even more jobs.

That compromise bill is the best starting place for you as you consider possible next steps. I have always believed that we can decarbonize while creating and maintaining good paying, union jobs. That's why I negotiated a clean energy bill that would do just that. On May 31, President Drea and Vice President Devaney visited my office in Springfield to request that the Governor's Office reach a deal on right-sized subsidies for Exelon's Illinois nuclear fleet, as their number one priority for the legislative session. My administration was able to negotiate a deal that would provide needed short term financial relief to Byron, Dresden, and Braidwood over 5 years, thereby securing the near-term financial safety of Exelon's entire Illinois fleet, saving tens of thousands of good jobs at a cost to the average residential ratepayer of just \$0.80/month. That deal is reflected in the compromise bill that my administration put forward in June, a bill that I would sign immediately, ending the heartbreaking uncertainty facing the nuclear workers at Byron and Dresden, including those of our friends at IBEW Local 15.

However, the Illinois Power Agency needs significant time to set up this nuclear support program. The next capacity auction is in November. If a deal is not passed by around mid-August, some observers have indicated that there will likely not be enough time to save Byron and Dresden. Last week, Exelon announced its intentions to move forward with filing decommissioning plans for Byron and Dresden

with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Under those plans, Byron would close in September, and Dresden would close in November, causing about 1,500 workers—primarily IBEW members—to lose their jobs soon. The decision to draw a line in the sand to prevent potential job loss in 2045 over certain job loss in 2021 is a negotiating position that does a disservice to both workers and our climate.

I will reiterate what I have said previously: any decarbonization framework must move Illinois aggressively beyond the status quo. That means good faith attempts at meaningful decarbonization are necessary to move our discussions forward. It is my understanding that the proposed draft language from Climate Jobs Illinois, sent to the Clean Jobs Coalition in June, would allow dirty power plants to stay open in perpetuity, threatening the health and wellbeing of the very communities that Climate Jobs Illinois' letter states it wants to protect. Moreover, despite efforts to prop up coal plants, the market is forcing closures, outpacing our attempts to help impacted communities. We saw this with the recent Waukegan and Romeoville closure announcements. The bottom line is that pointing fingers at the Clean Jobs Coalition, whose members have already made significant compromises on decarbonization and equity provisions, is unproductive, especially after Climate Jobs Illinois has refused to send an additional written proposal that was promised to them for weeks.

Again, considering the timeline of events is important. Climate Jobs Illinois sent a letter to my office in the waning hours of May session, pleading with the Governor's Office to make a deal with Exelon to save the nuclear fleet. We were able to do so. Then, at the 11th hour, we were informed that the fate of the Prairie State Energy Campus – the 7th largest emitter of greenhouse gas in the country, with voluminous amounts of co-pollutants that endanger the health and safety of Illinois' residents—many of them black and brown—was now the new critical issue.

We negotiated again in good faith and, taking both PSEC and CWLP at their word, agreed to allow them to remain open until 2045 if they installed 90% carbon capture equipment by 2034 – a date they expressed to legislative negotiators that they could meet. Our June legislative language further clarified that natural gas caps would be sector wide, rather than plant specific, and that IEPA rulemaking would, by law, be required to allow the cleanest plants to stay open the longest. This represented a good faith compromise, and one where both my office and environmentalists moved significantly.

I have negotiated in good faith as pro-coal forces have shifted the goalposts throughout this process. I indicated then, and I am reiterating now, that I stand ready and willing to sign the bill that reflected discussions in legislative working groups and included agreed upon policies that you received on June 10. If you are willing to remove the barriers to moving forward, the impasse you find yourselves at can be resolved. I now call on the General Assembly to pass that compromise bill immediately, save tens of thousands of union jobs that may otherwise disappear in mere weeks, and move Illinois toward a clean energy economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. B. P. A." with a stylized flourish at the end.