



# 100 percent renewable energy for Illinois:

## Setting our sights on the future we need

### It's time to transform the way we produce and consume energy.

We have a choice. Do we want to continue powering our lives by burning fossil fuels, destroying wild places, clean water, our health and the climate? Or are we ready to take a different path?

Today, we can harness clean, abundant energy from the sun and wind more efficiently—and cheaply—than ever before, tapping into power that doesn't pollute or make us sick. Yet, the U.S. still primarily produces and consumes energy from fossil fuels. Continuing to choose coal, oil and gas harms our environment and our health. It's time to break free.

It's time to transform the way we produce and consume energy.

### What does 100 percent renewable energy mean?

In a world run on 100 percent renewable energy, everything we need power for in our lives—our lights, our chargers, our refrigerators, our heating and cooling, our transportation—would run on energy sources that don't pollute our air and water or harm the climate.

That's why the call for 100 percent renewable energy focuses on getting off dirty energy. Other approaches, such as “net-zero emissions,” instead seek to accommodate it and expose people and the planet to harmful pollution for decades to come.

### How can we get to 100 percent renewable energy?

Passing ambitious clean energy and energy efficiency goals into law, including a commitment to 100 percent renewable energy, will help Illinois drive and coordinate the transformative changes needed to make that transition possible.

In addition to setting goals, Illinois can start moving toward the future Americans want and need by:

- Adopting conservation and efficiency measures to curb energy use and reduce waste;
- Building additional renewable energy capacity;
- Converting technologies that rely on the direct burning of dirty fuels in our homes, buildings and cars to electric alternatives, which can be powered through an increasingly green grid;
- Increasing energy storage capacity.

### What is clean energy?

### What is renewable energy?

### What is the difference?

Fossil fuels—including coal, oil and gas—are the most widespread and most harmful sources of dirty energy we use. Extracting, transporting, burning and disposing of fossil fuels destroys ecosystems, releases global warming pollution and threatens our health. Other conventional sources of power—such as biomass or trash incinerators, new hydropower dams, and nuclear plants—also create harmful pollution or waste, damage or destroy habitats and present health risks.

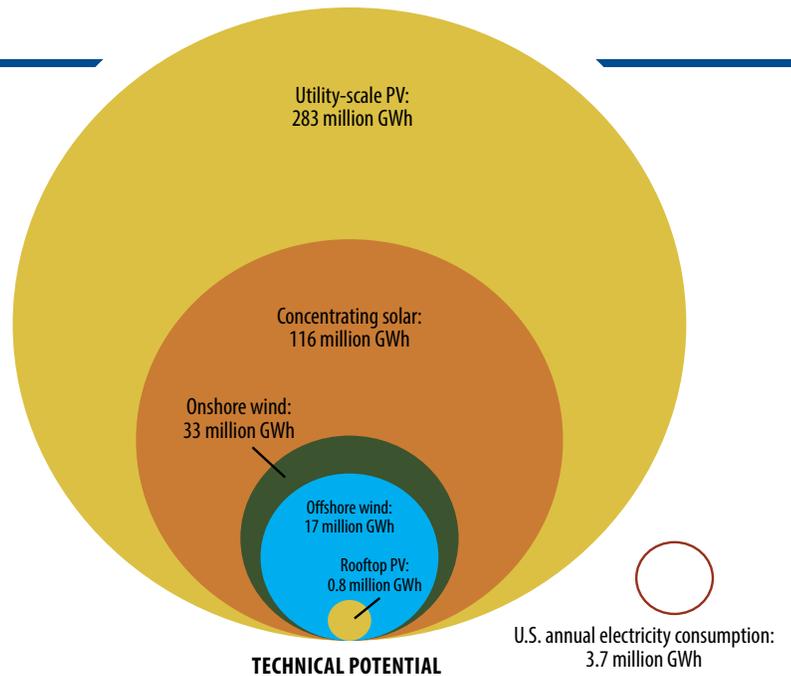
By contrast, clean energy sources are safe and virtually pollution-free, producing no global warming emissions or hazardous air or water pollution. Renewable energy resources are the most desirable clean energy options because they will never run out. Consuming renewable resources—including solar, wind and geothermal energy—doesn't diminish their availability and has minimal environmental impact.

Eliminating energy waste is also a crucial component of the 100 percent renewable energy vision. Energy efficiency measures alone could halve energy use in the U.S. by 2050, slashing the amount of total energy we need.

## Is renewable energy up to the challenge?

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the United States has the technical potential to meet its current electricity needs more than 100 times over with solar energy, and more than 10 times over with wind energy alone.

Between 2009 and 2018, the U.S. grew solar energy 40-fold and tripled its wind power. Renewable energy prices have plummeted and technologies continue to improve. The rapid growth of renewable energy over the past decade should give us the confidence to aim high.



## Why should Illinois commit to 100 percent renewable energy?

A vision can only become a reality if we commit to it. When Americans want to commit to a new direction, our collective tool is lawmaking. A legislative commitment to 100 percent renewable energy is an enforceable tool to help us reach the goal, setting in motion the concrete steps it will take to get to the future we need.



Most Americans support a commitment to 100 percent renewable energy. Today one in three Americans lives in a community already committed to 100 percent clean or renewable power. So passing a law just makes sense.

For the environment and public health, Illinois should pass legislation committing to 100 percent renewable energy— setting timely targets and benchmarks to build our renewable energy future.



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<https://environmentillinoiscenter.org/>