

Illinois Chamber of Commerce Energy Council

Energy Policy Statement

Approved by the Board of Directors, June 20, 2008

The members of the Energy Council recommend the Illinois Chamber Board of Directors adopt a policy statement to advocate advancement of the following energy policy goals:

Availability of energy

Nothing is more fundamental to a healthy economy than the availability of reliable energy. It is needed in every business. Its availability and cost profoundly affect every aspect of our economy -- the private and public sectors, our residents and families and our overall quality of life. Illinois' demand for energy is going to increase in the coming decades at the same time global energy demand is expected to increase 35 to 50 percent [Source: International Energy Association].

To that end, the Illinois Chamber is an advocate for policies in Illinois and nationally that will encourage the development and availability of all kinds of energy and conservation measures in an environmentally responsible and cost effective way to meet the needs of our society.

All kinds of energy

Because energy demand is going to increase in Illinois and across the globe, no one energy source is going to satisfy that demand. Fossil fuels will continue to be a critical component for meeting the energy needs of our state and nation. Alternative and renewable energy, as well as yet unknown or commercially unproven sources will no doubt grow and continue to emerge as more important elements of our nation's future energy supply.

Therefore, the Illinois Chamber advocates for policies that support the “and” approach to energy options. The “and” approach to energy policy states that it’s not about whether coal *or* wind *or* nuclear *or* biofuels *or* natural gas *or* biomass *or* crude oil *or* solar *or* battery cells will fuel our economy, it’s about the reality that we’re going to need coal *and* wind *and* nuclear *and* biofuels *and* natural gas *and* biomass *and* crude oil *and* solar *and* battery cells *and* other sources to meet the current and future energy needs that propel our economy and sustain our quality of life.

Conservation

It is critical that any plan to meet our state’s future energy includes the prudent and efficient use of energy. The cleanest form of energy is the one that was never produced because it wasn’t needed. The Chamber supports policies and new technologies that promote conservation and the efficient use of energy at home, during the commute and at the place of business – no matter how big or small. In addition the Chamber believes the most effective conservation policies are those that drive down usage through incentives versus penalties.

Security of supply

All these energy resources can come from places near and far -- from friendly places and not-so-friendly places. Historically, Illinois has been an energy-rich state and net-exporter of energy. There are still abundant opportunities using resources in the state and the region to help supply our energy needs.

Therefore, the Illinois Chamber advocates energy policies that promote local, state, national and North American sources of energy that provide the highest level of security and predictability in terms of availability of supply.

Illinois needs to encourage the creation of infrastructure to accommodate these kinds of energy sources. This approach improves our country’s national security and helps our local and national business climate because the more energy produced in Illinois and the United States, the more economic benefits from that production stay in our local and regional economies.

Increased energy production

The Illinois Chamber is proud of the state's heritage as a major energy producer. It is the policy of the Illinois Chamber to maintain the state's commitment to energy production as a key component of the state's economy by advocating for expansion, modernization, investment and siting of new energy production and transmission facilities that provide power, heat and fuel in our state.

Whether it's allowing new nuclear power facilities, embracing new cleaner coal technologies, expanding and modernizing refineries, permitting wind farms and other new alternative energies as well as creating transmission infrastructure for any and all of these energy sources, it is in the best interest of our state to increase our energy production and transmission capacity.

Marketplace solutions to energy needs

There is no better arbiter of determining the choices, costs and distribution of energy than the marketplace. Therefore, the Illinois Chamber supports policies that allow consumers the freedom and choices they need to determine how the various energy resources of the present and future will mix to meet the demand of Illinois' residents and businesses.

Promotion of private and public resources for energy research and development

Research and development on how best to produce and distribute traditional and alternative fuels will be critical in increasing their availability and improving on their environmental performance. The Illinois Chamber supports policies and activities that encourage private and government support for energy research and development.

The Illinois Chamber supports increased funding for national research laboratories, universities and public/private consortiums committed to expanding scientific knowledge, as well as commercialization of the findings.

Such policies have the added benefit of increasing Illinois' role in creating high-tech, high-level R&D jobs and improving Illinois' reputation as a place to invest in R&D as well as production facilities.

Predictable and Fair Government Permitting and Regulations

Companies will need to modernize, expand and build new facilities to meet the increase in the state's energy demands. An improvement in our energy infrastructure will create jobs and attract other businesses of all shapes and sizes to our state.

Energy companies have a choice, however, in determining where to upgrade and build these facilities. They will look to states in our region that have a permitting process that is predictable and fair, and environmental regulations that are effective *and* efficient.

Therefore, the Illinois Chamber supports creating more certainty in all aspects of the regulatory and rule-making process, including:

- Making the permitting process more transparent, predictable in length and more inclusive in allowing public comment to be a part of the public record.
- Promulgating practical environmental regulations that ensure we're protecting the environment while using a predictable process that encourages energy companies to invest in Illinois. Overly burdensome and obstructive environmental regulations cause frequent and unnecessary delays, do little to help the environment and do a lot to discourage long-term capital investment in our state. These roadblocks need to be removed.
- Encouraging cooperation and coordination between the various state government entities that oversee permitting and regulatory oversight to avoid conflicting requests and unnecessary delays.

Climate change and greenhouse gas policies

As stated previously, the Illinois Chamber supports policies that encourage energy companies of all kinds to find ways to produce energy in economically sound and environmentally respectful ways.

However, global warming and other greenhouse gas issues are not local, state or regional issues. The environment does not understand political boundaries. For example, greenhouse gases produced in China affect Illinois as much as greenhouse gases produced here.

Therefore, the Illinois Chamber does not support the adoption of individual state or regional regulations on private industry that purport to address global climate change or greenhouse gas initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions. It is the policy of the Illinois Chamber that such law or regulation authority is appropriately reserved for the federal government. However, state and local governments may be appropriate forums for incentive programs that stimulate behaviors by individuals or companies to reduce their carbon footprint.

An energy industry that is a growth industry in Illinois

Creating an environment where there are reliable, secure supplies of energy – efficiently regulated – can only help keep energy costs competitive and attract business to Illinois.

All the policies stated in this document allow for and encourage the growth of the energy sector in the state. In addition to providing the fuel that drives our economy, the energy sector provides thousands of jobs that improve the economy of Illinois and the energy choices for Illinois consumers.

Illinois has been and can still be a major energy provider and infrastructure hub where companies trying to confront big energy issues want to come and do business.