



## Future Energy Jobs Bill and Community Solar: Why Renewable Energy is Going to Explode in Illinois

The [Future Energy Jobs Bill](#) of 2017 (SB 2814) will incentivize \$12-\$15 billion in construction of renewable energy projects including residential, commercial and industrial applications of wind and solar. The Bill improves and modernizes the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that says Illinois will achieve 25% clean energy by 2025; a process that was 'broken' since 2012. The Bill creates a secure, stable budget of more than \$200 million annually for the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) that become a cash incentive for project owners and effectively reduces project expenses by 20%. Combined with the federal ITC (Incentive Tax Credit) of 30% and accelerated depreciation (MACRS), business owners can realize an 85% discount on solar and wind projects. The Bill earmarks funds for the installation of 2700 megawatts of solar power which is a 5,000% increase over the current 55 megawatts. This translates into 415,000 residential solar installations or 77,000 commercial projects that will be built between now and 2030.

### How Solar Power Works for Illinois

Solar power offsets the cost of electricity by 50-75%. It's a technology that makes electricity from sunshine, so the feedstock is free. If you pay power bills, you can benefit from solar power. The larger the bill, the larger the benefit. Traditionally, solar works best for owner occupied facilities (homes and businesses) and that will be the bulk of installations. But the new Future Energy Jobs Bill also funds what we call 'Community Solar' whereby renters, homeowners with shady roofs, and low income residents can buy solar power from a community solar garden. The community solar array is hosted on a Church, Apartment Building, School, or any large rooftop or piece of ground. It is owned by a third party and generates **residual income for the host institution** while also producing electricity that is sold into the grid to any rate payer in ComEd or Ameren territory who signs up for the community solar program (this process is called virtual net metering). Community solar is just one innovation in the new Future Energy Jobs Bill which also funds:

- Brownfields to Brightfields - Supports the reuse of landfills and industrial sites to solar farms

- Economic development and job growth - Will fuel \$12 to \$15 billion in renewable energy projects
- Protecting Net Metering - Compensates solar power owners in a fair and consistent manner
- Solar For All - Designates funds for low income job training and renewable energy projects

Resources:

[Full Text](#) of the Future Energy Jobs Bill (SB 2814 / PA 99-0906)

[Fact Sheet-Illinois RPS Fix](#) - Future Energy Jobs Bill Summary-2016.pdf

[ISEA Policy Webinar](#) - IL RPS, Dec 13, 2016

Illinois Solar Energy Association [www.illinoisolar.org](http://www.illinoisolar.org)

Midwest Renewable Energy Association [www.mrea.org](http://www.mrea.org)

Environmental Law & Policy Center [www.elpc.org](http://www.elpc.org)

About the Presenter:



[Tim Montague](#), M.S., Green Building Advisor and Renewable Energy Consultant, owner of Montague Brands. Mr. Montague has been writing, speaking and consulting on energy conservation, green building, renewable energy, and green jobs for the past decade. He learned about the power of solar energy in New Mexico in his backyard where he and his father built solar cookers and hot water heaters. As a co-leader of the [Champaign County Sustainability Network](#) he has organized dozens of educational events about

sustainability that bring together industry, the public, academia and community stakeholders to learn about sustainable energy, green building/infrastructure, waste reduction (zero waste) and water conservation. He serves on the boards of the [Illinois Green Business Association](#) and the [Association of Fundraising Professionals](#) East Central Illinois Chapter (AFPECI). He lives in Champaign-Urbana and enjoys endurance running and outdoor activities. [www.montaguebrands.com](http://www.montaguebrands.com) | [tim@montaguebrands.com](mailto:tim@montaguebrands.com) | 217.722.0429 m