



Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone: Zoom Meeting Agenda

Location: OCB, Oregon IL

Date/Time: 6/4/25 at 5 p.m.

| | | | |
|-----|------|---|-------|
| 5pm | I. | EZ Meeting Attendance and Call to Order | Chair |
| | II. | Minutes from 4/2/25 | Shaw |
| | III. | Financial and Administrator Reports | Shaw |
| | IV. | Old Business | Board |
| | V. | New Business | Board |
| | VI. | Next Meeting August 6th, 2025 on Zoom | Chair |

2025 Meetings of the Lee Ogle Enterprise Zone Board are "1st Wednesdays (with exceptions noted), every other month, at 10 A.M.":

1. February 5th
2. April 2nd
3. June 4th
4. August 6th
5. October 8th (changed from first Wednesday to better allow financial report)
6. December 3rd

Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone Meeting Minutes

Location: Zoom

Date: 4/2/2025 | Time: 10:00 am

Voting Membership Attendance

Guest Attendance

| In-Person | Remote | | In-Person | Remote |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rochelle Mayor John Bearrows (Chair) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Dixon Mayor Glen Hughes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amboy Mayor Frank Stenzel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mount Morris Designee Paula Diehl | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Oregon Mayor Ken Williams | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ashton President Tim Henert | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Franklin Grove Board John Nicholson | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lee County- Jeremy Englund | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ogle County Chair Bruce Larson | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | GREDCO Tricia Herrera | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | LCIDA Tom Demmer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | LOEZ Administrator Andy Shaw (Vice-Chair) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Call to Order

Nine members present for quorum.

Minutes

Minutes from 2/5 and 3/20 were presented in the board packet. Motion to accept by Englund, 2nd by Williams, passed with all in favor.

Financial and Admin Report

In the financial report, Shaw noted that we received two new project fees and the remainder of additions were from CD interest. We have several projects to be collected soon. Overall about 307k in the Project Fund. Motion to accept financial report by Hughes, 2nd by Englund, passed with all in favor.

Regarding the Admin Report, Shaw noted some updates on the abatement discussion from recent meetings. The Jackpot abatement has been continued per the memo previously discussed. Shaw and Demmer had a good meeting with Ogle abatement officials to understand each other's process.

With our amendments submitted to DCEO on 2/27, one is already certified on 3/18. Abatement resolutions to support these new project areas are underway with Oregon Park Dist already passed and scheduled presentations to Oregon Library Dist and Rock Valley College. Many more to follow. Illinois TIF and EZ conference is in May. The I-88 West regional promotional economic developer co-op is regrouping after a ten year hiatus, now likely including more emphasis of Rochelle, and extending west to



the Morrison/Prophetstown exit. The group will co-promote when possible, such as at trade shows where all communities may not be present.

Next Meeting

June 4th is set for the meeting date, we have had semi-annual June and December dinner or lunch meetings, consensus for a dinner meeting in Oregon, location TBA.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Hughes, 2nd by Williams, all in favor

2025 Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone Budget
January 1-May 31, 2025

| | Budget Amount | Actual |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| INCOME | | |
| Lee County | \$ 12,563.34 | \$ 12,563.34 |
| Dixon | \$ 27,701.76 | \$ 27,701.76 |
| Amboy | \$ 849.91 | \$ 849.91 |
| Ashton | \$ 761.11 | \$ 761.11 |
| Franklin Grove | \$ 754.77 | \$ 754.77 |
| Ogle County | \$ 9,428.84 | \$ 9,428.84 |
| Rochelle | \$ 29,843.00 | \$ 29,843.00 |
| Mount Morris | \$ 2,219.89 | \$ 2,219.89 |
| Oregon | \$ 1,052.86 | \$ 1,052.86 |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$ 85,175.48 | \$ 85,175.48 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Personnel | \$ 50,736.00 | \$ 25,716.62 |
| Fringe | \$ 12,684.00 | \$ 1,950.12 |
| Travel | \$ 3,488.08 | \$ 634.90 |
| Other/Indirect | \$ 8,150.76 | \$ 3,487.85 |
| Non-Fixed Expenses/Contractual-Marketing | \$ 6,448.78 | \$ 3,742.62 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ 81,507.62 | \$ 35,532.11 |

| Name | Transaction Date | Transaction Number | Transaction Type | Contact | Note | Movement Note | Fund | Debits | Credits | Amount | Balance |
|--|------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 03/31/2025 | 55504824 | Deposit | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | Interest Earned | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$302.39 | | \$302.39 | \$107,002.11 |
| | 04/03/2025 | 55588968 | Deposit | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | CD Interest Earned | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$590.70 | | \$590.70 | \$107,592.81 |
| | 04/08/2025 | 55722456 | Deposit | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | LOEZ Project Fee - Kyle and Anna McQuality, Pitman Service | Kyle and Anna McQuality | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$1,200.00 | | \$1,200.00 | \$108,792.81 |
| | | | | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | | Pittman Service | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$125.00 | | \$125.00 | \$108,917.81 |
| | 04/10/2025 | 55799216 | Deposit | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | LOEZ Project Fee - Helm Construction | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$593.75 | | \$593.75 | \$109,511.56 |
| | 04/30/2025 | 56560952 | Deposit | Sauk Valley Bank | Interest Earned | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$313.52 | | \$313.52 | \$109,825.08 |
| | 05/05/2025 | 56560951 | Deposit | Sauk Valley Bank | CD Interest Earned | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$501.04 | | \$501.04 | \$110,326.12 |
| | 05/31/2025 | 57139967 | Deposit | Sauk Valley Bank | Interest Earned | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$327.76 | | \$327.76 | \$110,653.88 |
| Total for 1002 - Sauk Valley Bank - LOEZ | | | | | | | | \$56,746.13 | \$50,000.00 | \$6,746.13 | \$110,653.88 |
| 1501 - Investments - CDs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Beginning Balance | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 01/31/2025 | 53931560 | Deposit | Blackhawk Hills Regional Council | QwickRate CD Maturity | | Held for Others - LOEZ | | | | \$200,000.00 |
| | 02/25/2025 | 54549578 | Check | Sauk Valley Bank | SVB CD | | Held for Others - LOEZ | \$50,000.00 | \$50,000.00 | \$-50,000.00 | \$150,000.00 |
| Total for 1501 - Investments - CDs | | | | | | | | \$50,000.00 | \$50,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$200,000.00 |
| Income | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5180 - Revenue from Program Service Fees | | | | | | | | | | | |



To: Enterprise Zone Advisory Board
From: Andy Shaw, Administrator
Date: 6/4/2025
Subject: Report of Activities

1. Financial Reports: See previous pages for reports. All governmental partners have paid their share of 2025 admin costs to BHRC as seen on the EZ admin expenditure summary. Project Fund details show several projects paid, a couple big ones on the horizon. With one CD renewed and a handful of CD interest entries are seen the new balance is \$106699.72 in the bank account and \$200k in CD's. Overall we have about \$307k in the Project Fund.
2. Abatement Issues: Updates since previous meeting:
 - Taxes have been calculated and projects where less abatement was offered than we anticipated were corrected, example to discuss at end of report.
 - It appears to that each that were of concern had amount added to make the project whole, but I am inquiring on one question before reaching out to the EZ clientele to let them know status.
3. Steward EDA Project: No update. They are incorporating the crossing elimination study information from Fehr Graham's work and finalizing other portions of the narrative and background sections
4. Amendments:
 - I delivered our 3 new amendments to DCEO in Springfield on 2/27/25
 - Fun on 52/Pub n Patio, certified, have met several times with owner
 - HA International Industrial Expansion, certified, had a private groundbreaking for land clearing but has not applied to me for BMEC
 - Constellation Nuclear, certified
 - I have a pending MOU with Constellation with language added to opt-out of property tax abatement:

•This project is opting out of Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone Real Estate Tax Abatement. Taxable improvements and real estate tax may be subject to existing or future tax/valuation agreements with Ogle County taxing districts beyond the control of the Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone.

- Abatement resolutions for the Amboy and Oregon area projects so that is getting underway now as well:
 - Oregon Park District Board Meeting 2/11, Passed
 - Rock Valley College, set for May 27th, Passed
 - Oregon Library, set for April 14th, Passed
 - Also looking to get Sublette Fire and Township, Lee Center Township, Oregon Schools, Fire, Township, likely other elsewhere



5. Conferences:

- Illinois Enterprise Zone Conference is May 7-9 in Springfield, co-hosted with the TIF association again
 - Zone Extension Process was discussed:
 - Needs to be discussed by State-level EZ Board, meets only in years when zones are awarded.
 - There is one zone available in 2025 so they will meet
 - Many have offered to assist with any discussion
 - May need nudges from others: reach out to legislative, executive, DCEO, Team RED, to keep getting noticed
- Illinois Economic Development Association summit is June 10-12 in Peoria

6. Rochelle EECBG Grant for Energy Planning:

- The RFP for the City of Rochelle's upcoming Energy Action Plan
- In early February, we helped the city applied for an implementation grant from IEPA to leverage up an existing LED streetlight upgrade plan, this is still pending

7. Upcoming Projects:

- Additional taxing districts -ongoing
- Project closings and reporting followup-ongoing
- Promote our added apartment zone areas for rehabs-ongoing

8. Meetings Attended

- 4/1 SCRIC Call
- 4/2 Lee Ogle EZ Board
- 4/2 LCIDA
- 4/4 Amboy EZ Project Meeting
- 4/8 Dixon Project Rock Ceremony
- 4/14 Oregon Library Board
- 4/15 SCRIC Call
- 4/22 I-88 West Meeting
- 4/23 Rochelle Project Site Visit
- 4/25 CEDS Committee Meeting
- 4/29 County Board Chairs Roundtable
- 5/5 Rochelle Energy Plan Committee
- 5/6 Rochelle Small Business Incentives Presentation
- 5/7-9 Illinois Enterprise Zone and TIF Conference
- 5/13 Amboy Project Visit
- 5/15 Ogle County EDC
- 5/15 Rochelle Energy Plan Committee
- 5/15 Rochelle Chamber Dinner
- 5/19 BHRC Council
- 5/22 Rochelle Energy Plan Committee



- 5/27 Rochelle Energy Plan Committee
- 5/27 Rock Valley College Board

| Loves | "24-36-100-026" | | Change in EAV from Year 1 | | 15.33% | | \$3,096.00 | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------|---------------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------|------------|----------|
| year | EAV from bill | % EAV+ | rate from bill | Tax Bill | tax w/no abatement | Project EAV | abatement | % abated |
| 1-2021 | 1,710,926 | 0.00% | .0968539 | \$99,049 | 165,709 | \$1,376,515 | \$66,660 | 40.23 |
| 2-2122 | 1,710,926 | 0.00% | .0958634 | \$98,036 | 164,015 | \$1,376,515 | \$65,978 | 40.23 |
| 3-2223 | 1,710,926 | 0.00% | .0931449 | \$95,256 | 159,364 | \$1,376,516 | \$64,107 | 40.23 |
| 4-2324 | 1,798,012 | 5.09% | .0883999 | \$98,102 | 158,944 | \$1,376,515 | \$60,841 | 38.28 |
| 2425 Abate | | | .0856916 | | 169,090 | \$1,545,672 | \$66,225 | 39.17 |
| 2425 Catchup | | | .0856916 | | 169,090 | \$70,066 | \$3,002 | 1.78 |
| 5-2425 | 1,973,240 | 9.75% | .0856916 | \$99,906 | 169,090 | \$1,615,738 | \$69,227 | 40.94 |
| 2526 Abate | | | | | | | | |
| 2526 Catchup | | | | | | | | |
| 6-2526 | | | | | | | | |



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Solar power's lost opportunity in PJM

By Peter Behr | 05/22/2025 06:51 AM EDT

The mid-Atlantic grid operator says its speedier process for bringing more power onto its system will expand renewable energy. Is it too late?



Solar power production is up dramatically in PJM, but it is still a bit player as the Eastern grid operator works to meet rising electricity demand. Edwin Torres/ NJ Governor's Office

Second in an occasional series on PJM. Read the first [here \(https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/03/25/trump-says-coal-should-make-a-comeback-at-what-price-00246649\)](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/03/25/trump-says-coal-should-make-a-comeback-at-what-price-00246649).

Seven years ago, RWE, a multibillion-dollar German clean energy builder, launched a bold solar power program aimed at American farmlands.

It proposed 28 solar and storage projects totaling 2,700 megawatts of new capacity. To move that electricity to cities and suburbs, RWE had to tie onto the mid-Atlantic region's interstate grid, PJM Interconnection.

But RWE soon found itself caught in a Bermuda Triangle of delay — PJM's "interconnection queue" — where solar, wind and gas projects wait for years for technical analysts to assess how the new power supply will affect the carefully balanced regional grid.

The regional transmission organization responsible for coordinating flows and managing the power market across a 13-state region from Illinois to Virginia saw its requests to tie onto the grid quadruple between 2015 and 2020 and continue to rise. In 2022, PJM stopped accepting project proposals to attack the backlog.

By the end of 2023, according to [a review by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory \(https://emp.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/Queued%20Up%202024%20Edition_R2.pdf\)](https://emp.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/Queued%20Up%202024%20Edition_R2.pdf), half of those projects were shelved by their developer.

RWE shared that fate. It is still waiting for PJM to complete the approval process on 13 of the 28 projects, PJM's data shows. On 15 others, it has simply given up, withdrawing the projects after spending nearly five years waiting for final decisions.

Unless the trends change, PJM — serving 20 percent of the U.S. population — will end this decade as a case study of a wasted opportunity to deploy mature, carbon-free solar technology.

Solar power production is up dramatically from a year ago, but it remains a bit player inside PJM, contributing to just over 2 percent of the power generated in 2024, according to Monitoring Analytics, PJM's independent market monitor.

"Why are all those projects in the queue?" said Abraham Silverman, former general counsel of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. "Because there was consumer demand to buy clean energy. Those projects all thought that they had a market opportunity in PJM."

The slow work of PJM as a gatekeeper for entry onto the grid is now colliding with skyrocketing electricity demand set for states like Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. As a result, old coal plants primed for closure may run for longer, and a rush to plan for more natural gas generation to power the tech industry's data centers could cement fossil fuel use for decades longer.

PJM Chief Executive Manu Asthana has faced withering questions from Washington and state capitals about why PJM had not acted with greater urgency to shift into higher gear when it was clear electricity supply and demand were out of sync, with one eye on getting more of that potential solar power built.

PJM has made strides in overhauling its interconnection policy and hiring staff, cutting into the queue backlog, Asthana told Congress. "We had a queue of about 200,000 megawatts of generation," he said in March. "We have whittled that down to 67,000 megawatts, an incredible amount of progress."

But most new solar projects with interconnection agreements from PJM never started construction. Project financing became wobbly. Landowner agreements ran out. Supply chain issues cropped up. Plans changed during their time in the queue, according to an analysis by POLITICO's E&E News.

PJM and MISO, operator of the central U.S. grid that stretches from Canada to the Gulf Coast, are pushing to narrow the gap between the number of projects entering their queues and the number that make it out with any hope of being fully developed.

Solar power has been by far the fastest growing new source of power in many parts of the country. It can be deployed relatively fast and at a lower cost than gas plants. Texas alone added enough solar power last year to power roughly 8 million homes. And solar and battery storage were expected to be more than 80 percent of the new utility-scale electricity added across the nation in 2025, the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimated in February.

'Imagine how projects deteriorate'

The whipsaw effect of American politics and the relentless upping of future power projections are rapidly changing renewable energy's prospects, building the case for gas power now and nuclear power after 2030.

Under former President Joe Biden, 15,000 megawatts worth of offshore wind projects were green-lighted along the Atlantic Coast. Democratic governors inside PJM counted on those projects to meet clean energy goals and power economic development. Their fate today is clouded at best, confronted by President Donald Trump's fossil energy "dominance" agenda.

Under Trump and in PJM, coal is getting a new lease on life. But it's also a result of deepening concerns about whether enough power will be running across PJM wires in 2028 to ensure (with room to spare) that the lights stay on and factories keep humming.

With the extraordinary rise in projected power demand, PJM CEO Asthana, who has said he will leave PJM at the end of the year, told lawmakers coal has to keep burning.

"We must keep the supply that we have today," he said, going one step further. "We must try to bring back what we can from retirement."

RWE, the third-largest U.S. solar energy developer, has pulled back into a more conservative, risk-wary investment plan that may foreshadow a slower path for new renewable power in this country.

"President Donald Trump has set a new course for the country's energy and climate policy," RWE observed in its just-issued 2024 annual report. "It is impossible to predict the consequence of the change of course in U.S. energy policy for the expansion of renewable energy in the U.S. at this time."

A company spokesperson declined to discuss strategy but pointed to RWE AG Chief Executive Markus Krebber's remarks prepared for the company's annual meeting last month. There, Krebber outlined a policy to move away from competitive energy markets like PJM, which supply two-thirds of U.S. electricity by taking bids from generators' to fill each's day's supply. (The rest of the U.S. is served by traditional regulated utilities.)

Given Trump's policy and tariff whipsaws, the company has said RWE's solar and wind deals will require data centers, utilities and other customers to pay up front for clean power.

"Only if these conditions are met will further investments be possible, given the political environment," Krebber said.

His caution around new development is echoed by Mark Rostafin, co-chief executive of Texas-based Vesper Energy. Vesper just opened a 600-megawatt solar farm in the Texas Panhandle.

"You'll wait till the permitting is done and you have good visibility into equipment supply," Rostafin said. A customer commitment will be part of the final financing agreements.

Just four years ago, PJM's cluster of states seemed ready to host a sharp expansion of solar and wind energy to back Biden's aspirational goals for a carbon-free power grid. PJM states could not approach the solar power potential of the Sun Belt, but renewable energy's prices were competitive in PJM's power market. And many of the states had renewable energy targets.

PJM's Grid of the Future report in 2022 predicted a bright future for carbon-free power. "PJM's fuel mix will drastically change due to state and corporate clean energy policy targets, with solar and wind generation increasing and replacing coal and natural gas generation."

The report expected wind and solar resources to grow between three and eight times over the next 15 years. The prediction didn't factor in the near-paralysis in the PJM interconnection queue as project proposals poured in.

"Let's call it sort of a slow-motion car pileup," said Kent Chandler, former chair of the Kentucky Public Service Commission. PJM has tended to react to problems, not get ahead of them, added Chandler, who led the Organization of PJM States, a sounding board for state interests in the regional grid.

Only a fraction of proposed power plants in PJM and other regional grids were approved by 2023

Number of proposed power plants seeking approval to connect to their regional grid, by status

| | Operational | Seeking approval | Withdrawn by developer | |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| PJM | 1.2K | 3.1K | 4.1K | 8.3K |
| Rest of U.S. | 3K | 8.5K | | 13.8K |
| | | | | 25.3K |

Notes: Data as of Dec. 2023.
Source: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Peter Behr/POLITICO

"It seems like PJM management fixes issues with a 'squeaky wheel gets the grease' mindset," Chandler added. "Whatever issue poses the biggest risk, that's the one they go to next."

Jeff Shields, PJM senior manager of external communications, asked to respond to such criticism, said the organization has had to deal with costs of new generation that are higher than consumers want to pay. That has led to some "piecemeal" policy changes, he said.

PJM saw project applications accelerate in 2020 and had its new strategy in place in 2022, he said. "We have processed two-thirds of our backlog and will be fully through our backlog next year."

New projects will be accepted in 2026 and decisions made in two years, he added. "[We] expect them to be a high percentage of renewable and batteries."

PJM's leadership is squeezed by conflicting climate policies in its domain, where blue states with strict clean energy mandates sit alongside red states that share Trump's romance with coal. When Pennsylvania's Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro threatened this year to pull his state out of PJM over rising energy prices, PJM listened.

Would-be developers faced detailed analyses by PJM to make sure the new generation wouldn't overload the grid, notes University of Wisconsin, Madison, assistant professor Sarah Johnston. In PJM's case, three increasingly complex and expensive studies were required. Only at the end of the process did developers learn whether they would need to build new power lines or even substations to prevent possible overloading.

"Interconnection costs can be very high and are hard to predict," Johnston and colleagues wrote in a 2023 analysis, with high-end charges reaching \$41 million for a 100 MW plant. That is roughly one-quarter of the typical installation costs for a wind or solar generator plant, they said.

"Over half of the developers who reported withdrawing, suspending or pausing projects identified interconnection upgrade costs as a significant concern," concluded Silverman, the former New Jersey regulatory counsel, and research colleagues who [surveyed developers in the PJM queue for a 2024 report \(https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/publications/outlook-for-pending-generation-in-the-pjm-interconnection-queue/\)](https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/publications/outlook-for-pending-generation-in-the-pjm-interconnection-queue/) for the Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy.

Agreements with landowners are only good for one or two years typically. "And then you have to start the whole process over again," Silverman noted. "You can imagine how the projects deteriorate."

AI stunner

If the backlog was a surprise, the generative artificial intelligence blockbuster stunned PJM and the rest of the industry.

In just the past two years, private-sector and government [projections of power demand \(https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/05/21/electricity-demand-projected-to-rise-25-percent-by-2030-00358973\)](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/05/21/electricity-demand-projected-to-rise-25-percent-by-2030-00358973) across the country through 2030 have changed a lot. Six months after the release of the Grid of the Future report in 2022, OpenAI released ChatGPT, triggering what is now a relentless drive by big tech companies to secure electricity supply. PJM's estimate of future peak demand skyrocketed.

PJM leadership is now riveted on the risk that existing coal- and older gas-fired power plants will retire faster than they can be replaced. Today, according to PJM, the grid has a comfortable level of spare capacity to meet the top demand forecast for this summer of 154 gigawatts.

By 2030, however, PJM predicts [maximum demand \(https://www.pjm.com/-/media/DotCom/about-pjm/newsroom/fact-sheets/pjm-at-a-glance.pdf\)](https://www.pjm.com/-/media/DotCom/about-pjm/newsroom/fact-sheets/pjm-at-a-glance.pdf) could exceed 180 GW if enough power can be brought on line to satisfy data center developers. At the same time, today's peak capacity of 183 GW could drop by 40 GW if plant retirements go as planned, leaving PJM's market far short of supply.

To replace shuttered coal and gas plants with variable renewable power would require at least building 83 GW of wind, solar and storage, according to PJM.

Now, with energy scarcity dominating the outlook, the value of around-the-clock gas-fired and nuclear generation appears to have vaulted ahead of renewable power in PJM.

Evidence of this shift was the organization's decision this year to offer fast-track reviews to "shovel ready" power plant projects that could have the biggest impact on future supply shortages. PJM's criteria favored gas plants, which ended up by far the biggest source of proposals, offering more than 16 GW of potential new capacity. Just one small solar project asked to be included in the process.

This month, PJM announced it had selected 51 of the projects, and natural gas unsurprisingly dominated the list. Storage projects were chosen, but the solitary solar proposal wasn't picked.

Opportunity lost

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has approved major changes in the interconnection process proposed by PJM that can help future solar, wind and storage projects, industry leaders and energy analysts say.

But many wish it had come sooner.

For example, PJM has scrapped a “first-come, first-served” policy that considered projects as they arrived and now prioritizes proposals that are closest to construction. Many of the renewable energy projects that piled up in the queue previously were speculative, but they still took the time of PJM analysts. The new policy should help the strongest applicants, including renewable projects, advocates say.

Another proposed change, not yet approved by FERC, would make it easier for new generators to take over the grid connection of a closed-down coal or gas plant as long as the total power output didn’t increase. A relatively simple, speedier review would replace the yearslong queue analyses.

“That’s a really important piece of creativity that PJM has embraced in order to move things along more quickly,” Andrew Levitt, senior consultant at the Brattle Group and former PJM market expert, said in an interview.

“I don’t know why it took them a while to get there,” he said.

“If these changes had been available three or four years ago, it would have been much easier to bring solar and battery storage on using the grid connections of retiring fossil plants,” said Hannes Pfeifenberger, a Brattle Group principal, in the same interview. “It would have made a big difference.”

“The human condition can be summarized as we ought to, but we don’t,” Pfeifenberger added.

“We would all say, ‘How come it took so long?’” said George Hershman, chief executive of SOLV Energy, one of the largest U.S. solar project builders.

“We should have solar plants and storage plants at every decommissioned power plant in the country,” he said. “It should have been a quick study.”

PJM, a nonprofit with more than 500 energy sector voting members — who can leave the organization if they choose — deserves great credit for managing a secure, competitive power market, says Rob Gramlich, president of Grid Strategies, a research and analysis firm. But the members aren’t looking for more competition, he added.

“It doesn’t help that probably the stakeholders in PJM — the incumbent companies — tend to benefit from high prices,” Gramlich said, adding that a jammed-up interconnection queue that blocks new entrants serves that goal. “That’s not PJM staff’s fault, but sort of the structure of the situation.”

Hershman and other clean energy advocates hold on to hopes for solar power’s future in PJM despite the darkening present.

Looking ahead, if Congress cancels the clean energy tax benefits in the Inflation Reduction Act, “that is whole new kettle of fish that developers would have to look at very carefully” Silverman said.

“But in an alternative universe where PJM’s interconnection queue is a predictable, two-year process,” Silverman said, “I don’t think there’s any reason why you wouldn’t see solar projects flooding back in to PJM. The economics are all there.”

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Constellation, Meta Sign 20-Year Deal for Clean, Reliable Nuclear Energy in Illinois

CLINTON, IL – JUNE 3, 2025 – Constellation (Nasdaq: CEG) and Meta have signed a 20-year power purchase agreement (PPA) for the output of the Clinton Clean Energy Center to support Meta’s clean energy goals and operations in the region with 1,121 megawatts of emissions-free nuclear energy. Beginning in June of 2027, the agreement supports the relicensing and continued operations of Constellation’s high-performing Clinton nuclear facility for another two decades after the state’s ratepayer funded zero emission credit (ZEC) program expires. This deal will expand Clinton’s clean energy output by 30 megawatts through plant uprates; preserve 1,100 high-paying local jobs; deliver \$13.5 million in annual tax revenue; and add \$1 million in charitable giving to local nonprofits over five years.

“Last year, Constellation’s announced plan to restart the Crane Clean Energy Center became national news, but despite all of the interest and overwhelming support, a key question was missed: why did we let such a valuable plant close in the first place? We all know that the closure cost our community jobs, tax revenue, more pollution and higher prices,” said Joe Dominguez, president and CEO, Constellation. “We are proud to partner with Meta because they asked that important question, and even better, they figured out that supporting the relicensing and expansion of existing plants is just as impactful as finding new sources of energy. Sometimes the most important part of our journey forward is to stop taking steps backwards.”

“We are excited to partner with Constellation and the Clinton community to ensure the long-term operations of the nuclear plant, add new capacity, and help preserve over 1,000 jobs. Securing clean, reliable energy is necessary to continue advancing our AI ambitions,” said Urvi Parekh, Head of Global Energy at Meta. “We are proud to help keep the Clinton plant operating for years to come and demonstrate that this plant is an important piece to strengthening American leadership in energy.”

The Clinton Clean Energy Center was slated for premature closure in 2017 after years of financial losses, despite being one of the best performing nuclear plants in Illinois. Clinton’s retirement was prevented by enactment of the Future Energy Jobs Act, which established a Zero Emission Credit program that provides financial support to the plant through mid-2027. Constellation’s agreement with Meta is a market-based solution that essentially replaces the ZEC program and ensures long-term operations of the plant without ratepayer support. The PPA will enable the Clinton Clean Energy Center to continue to flow power onto the local grid, providing grid reliability and low-cost power to the region for decades to come. Meta is purchasing the plant’s clean energy attributes as part of its commitment to match 100% of its electricity use with clean and renewable energy.

The Clinton Clean Energy Center’s economic and environmental impacts are significant. The Center directly employs over 530 people, contributes approximately \$13.5 million in annual taxes, and generates enough carbon-free electricity to power over 800,000 homes. An [analysis](#) by The Brattle Group found that shuttering Clinton would raise emissions by more than 34 million metric tons of carbon over 20 years, the equivalent to putting approximately 7.4 million gasoline-powered cars on the road for a year. The same report found that Illinois’ GDP would drop by \$765 million annually, impacting businesses and jobs across multiple industries. Constellation’s deal with Meta prevents these impacts.

The agreement with Meta will allow Constellation to add more new, clean, reliable energy to the grid in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator’s (MISO) zone four territory, covering central and southern Illinois. Under the deal, Clinton will add 30 megawatts of increased output from nuclear uprates. With the guarantee that Clinton will continue to run for another two decades, Constellation is also evaluating strategies to extend the plant’s existing early site permit or seek a new construction permit from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to pursue development of an advanced nuclear reactor or small modular reactor (SMR) at the Clinton Clean Energy Center site.

Constellation also is deepening its long-standing commitment to the Clinton community with increased charitable giving. The company will invest \$1 million over five years starting in 2026 to support workforce development, social services, education, and local nonprofits in Clinton and surrounding communities. The announcement comes as public support for nuclear power continues to rise. A recent [Gallup poll](#) found that support for nuclear energy jumped to 61% of U.S. adults, up from 55% in 2023.

The announcement was welcomed by Illinois policymakers and key stakeholders:

- “Constellation’s Clinton nuclear plant has long been an important part of our local economy, supporting a vibrant community with great jobs, excellent schools and well-resourced fire and police departments. While many other communities are losing jobs and tax revenues, Meta is investing in our future, preserving good-paying jobs, and driving economic development for decades to come.” – **Clinton Mayor Helen Michelassi**
- “Clinton has been a cornerstone of clean energy and good-paying jobs in central Illinois for decades. This partnership ensures that legacy continues – without burdening taxpayers. It’s the kind of forward-thinking investment we need more of in Illinois: one that supports families, boosts local economies and keeps reliable power on the grid.” – **Rep. Regan Deering (R-IL), who represents Illinois’s 88th District in the state legislature**
- “This partnership keeps Clinton at the forefront of clean energy while securing jobs and driving local growth. It’s the kind of smart, private investment that strengthens communities without adding taxpayer burden.” – **Rep. Sally Turner (R-IL), who represents Illinois’s 44th District in the state legislature**
- “The Clinton Clean Energy Center has been a vital source of affordable, reliable energy for central Illinois since 1987. Extending the plant’s operating license will preserve over 1,000 high-paying jobs for the next 20 years, providing long-term economic security and growth. This agreement is a major win for Clinton and for our entire region.” – **Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL), U.S. Representative for Illinois’s 15th Congressional District**
- “This agreement is great news. The highly skilled members of IBEW Local 51 deserve a stable work environment and this agreement delivers that.” – **Bobby Wendell, business manager and financial secretary of IBEW Local 51**

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About Constellation

Constellation Energy Corporation (Nasdaq: CEG), a Fortune 200 company headquartered in Baltimore, is the nation’s largest producer of reliable, emissions-free energy and a leading energy supplier to businesses, homes and public sector customers nationwide, including three-fourths of Fortune 100 companies. With annual output that is nearly 90% carbon-free, our hydro, wind and solar facilities paired with the nation’s largest nuclear fleet have the generating capacity to power the equivalent of 16 million homes, providing about 10% of the nation’s clean energy. We are committed to investing in innovative technologies to drive the transition to a reliable, sustainable and secure energy future. Follow Constellation on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).