

Clean Line Energy Moves Forward in Illinois

By Rebecca Steinfeld

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You might be surprised to learn that clean energy developers in the Midwest are waiting for permission to connect nearly 60,000 megawatts of wind power projects to the electric grid so that the abundant and clean wind in our region can power our homes and businesses. These projects could provide enough electricity for 13 million homes without any of the pollution from dirty power plants that causes asthma, heart problems or global warming.

In that context, and in a capital constrained economy, it is good news that Clean Line Energy is ready to make a much needed investment in the infrastructure to bring clean wind power to our markets cost-effectively. Clean Line applied today to become a utility in the state of Illinois, one step in the long process of gaining approval to build its new transmission line, the Rock Island Clean Line. We look forward to working with Clean Line and Illinois regulators to ensure that this goal is achieved with fairness to landowners, appropriate protections for lands and wildlife, fairness to ratepayers, and in a way that enables truly clean power to flourish in the 21st Century.

Building transmission is a job that must be done carefully and with the input of landowners, wildlife biologists, citizens and electricity customers across the region. There will be regulatory review of the Rock Island Clean Line, and our goals will be to ensure that –

1. Sensitive ecological and recreational areas are protected from the potential habitat damage and degradation that comes with building and maintaining new transmission lines;
2. Lines are sited so as to maximize clean energy transmission, and not extend the lives of old, highly polluting power plants;
3. In determining where and how much transmission is needed, planners fully incorporate the potential for energy efficiency and clean distributed generation sources;
4. Landowners in the transmission corridors are engaged and fairly compensated for the rights of way needed for new transmission.

Clean power from our very own wind-rich plains can replace a large portion of the old, inefficient power plants we currently rely upon, if we build the infrastructure to access it. This is an important ingredient in our new energy future.