



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Congressional delegation urges Governor Quinn to provide federal recovery funding for green-collar jobs programs at community colleges

House of Representative members unanimously support funding for statewide expansion of the Illinois Community College Sustainability Network

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Illinois' representatives in Congress are calling on Governor Pat Quinn to dedicate a portion of Illinois' Federal Recovery Act funding to expand a community college initiative to provide "green collar" jobs training statewide and to apply for further Federal funding to jump-start campus energy projects that could create 20,000 additional jobs.

In a letter signed by all of Illinois' eighteen current members of the House of Representatives, the delegation urges Governor Quinn to provide Recovery Act (ARRA) funding to expand the Illinois Community College Sustainability Network (ICCSN) to all of Illinois' 48 community colleges and to support further applications for Federal grants that will be awarded competitively from Washington. A copy of the letter is attached to this news release.

"Expanding the college sustainability center network statewide will change entrenched habits of energy consumption and develop the new green collar workforce," states the joint letter. "Rather than reinventing the same programs at each college, the centers share resources across the network to accelerate education and training for green workforce areas such as solar photovoltaic, geothermal, solar thermal, wind turbine, biodiesel, and local food production."

Illinois Community College Trustees Association President Jeff May praised the delegation's support. "To have all Illinois' Members of Congress unite behind providing Recovery Act funding for the Sustainability Network is strong evidence that this program is right for all of Illinois, right now," said May, a trustee of Joliet Junior College. "We are particularly grateful to Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-Evanston) and Congressman John Shimkus (R-Collinsville) for their leadership in winning the support of their colleagues in the Illinois Delegation."

Created in 2007 with a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Network initially consisted of seven colleges and four regional "sustainability centers" established to service the community colleges within their geographic areas. Today, all of Illinois' 48 community colleges have enlisted as Network members, but the Network lacks funding to create the permanent infrastructure to service and support college green job training and public information programs.

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (“Recovery Act”), enacted by Congress at President Obama’s request, includes significant funding to move America toward a future of greater energy efficiency and sustainable energy independence. The State of Illinois is scheduled to receive \$248.6 million in Recovery Act funding for Weatherization Assistance, and another \$103 million for the State Energy Program (SEP). The ICCSN proposal requests \$7.9 million in SEP funds for Network expansion.

The Congressional Delegation’s letter continues: “The ICCSN’s identified bid-ready campus energy projects at 33 colleges will create substantial new green collar employment and stimulate local economies throughout our state. At a cost of approximately \$560 million, the ICCSN campus projects will achieve multiple goals, providing ICCSN member colleges with on-the-job green collar workforce training, reducing energy consumption by 30% to 50%, and serving as model demonstration sites for future businesses and public sector projects.” According to ICCSN estimates, these projects would create approximately 20,000 jobs for Illinoisans.

Additional Recovery Act funding for campus energy retrofit projects may be awarded through competitive federal grants. “The ICCSN proposal is perfectly suited to fulfill several stated goals for our nation’s economic recovery program,” says the delegation’s letter. “We will be pleased to support your administration’s requests for ICCSN funding.”

Additional information about the ICCSN is at <http://ilccsn.org>.

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