

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 18, 2009

Pat Quinn  
Governor of Illinois  
207 Statehouse  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

Substantial Federal funding will soon be available to Illinois and other states as a result of enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). We strongly recommend your support for funding the Illinois Community College Sustainability Network (ICCSN) with ARRA stimulus funds.

As you know from your participation in the 2008 Sustainable University Symposium and your history of involvement in sustainability issues, the ICCSN began only two years ago as a collaboration among seven colleges. The network has now grown to include 40 of Illinois' 48 community colleges, covering every region of our state. The network's enormous potential has been limited only by the lack of available funds.

With ARRA funding, the ICCSN will quickly implement two core strategies that are thoroughly consistent with the expressed purposes of the Federal stimulus program:

- 1) Providing quality statewide training for new, green collar jobs by completing the statewide build-out of ICCSN Sustainability Centers, developing 5 regional sustainability centers (\$1 million each), leading to the expansion of the current 4 campus sustainability centers to 24 centers statewide (\$3.6 million).
- 2) Stimulating creation of and support for over 20,000 jobs throughout Illinois by funding bid-ready green energy construction projects at 33 ICCSN member college campuses.

Expanding the college sustainability center network statewide will change entrenched habits of energy consumption and develop the new green collar workforce. The four initial college sustainability centers have proven their effectiveness in reaching consumers and businesses with information and workshops on a variety of subjects – from conservation and renewable energy to energy audits and energy performance contracting. 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.

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 business and public sector projects.

The ICCSN also proposes to employ its collaborative structure to create between 6 and 10 green collar training centers in urban areas, to provide rapid training for green collar workers to implement weatherization projects that are also a focus of ARRA funding. At a cost of \$5 million to \$15 million each, these centers will partner with their surrounding communities to accelerate training and skill integration for unemployed and low income workers who will use these new green jobs for neighborhood and community development in Chicago and other major population areas throughout Illinois.

The ICCSN proposal is perfectly suited to fulfill several stated goals for our nation's economic recovery program. Moreover, as an existing network of established public institutions accustomed to prudent budget and procurement practices, ICCSN can "hit the ground running" to create new jobs in the hard-hit construction and service sectors – with a minimum of delay and administrative expense.

In addition, the permanent structure created to train workers for energy conservation and renewable energy projects will continue long after Illinois and the nation recover from the recession, creating a legacy of effective public-private partnerships to conserve energy and continue to provide good, green collar jobs for our workforce.

While many details concerning distribution of ARRA funding are still outstanding, we understand that in addition to block grants, some funding may be available through competitive grants managed by the Departments of Energy, Labor, and Education. We will be pleased to support your administration's requests for such ICCSN grant funding.

We also understand that funds may be provided to ICCSN through its existing partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), minimizing bureaucratic delay and hastening the stimulus program's intended impact.

We believe the ICCSN proposal is particularly deserving of ARRA funding since it can serve as a needed model approach for other states to follow.

Governor Quinn, we urge you to join us in supporting the ICCSN proposal. We eagerly await the positive impact this program can have on our communities throughout Illinois and we encourage you to request and apply Federal funding for this program as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you and your administration to complete the ICCSN program.

Yours truly,

Illinois Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

John

Alan King

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Frank Mangello

Phil Hare

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