



Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce Joins Illinois Clean Air Now Coalition

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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CHICAGO – The Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce, the largest voice of Black businesses in the state, announced today that it has joined Illinois Clean Air Now (ICAN), a coalition of clean energy, health and transportation stakeholders from Illinois and around the country.

“The work that ICAN is doing is an effort that we fully support because we know that this endeavor will help the Black community on two important fronts: reducing pollution in our neighborhoods and creating jobs for our community,” said Larry Ivory, President and CEO of the Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce. “We are mobilizing to work with this cross-section of industry leaders and advocates to bring clean transportation to our communities.”

ICAN represents a convergence of industry leaders calling for clean transportation that will improve public health, create jobs, and lead to a greener, more sustainable state. Recognizing that any investment in a green economy should positively impact marginalized communities, the ICAN coalition forged a partnership with the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce to make sure state and municipal policies around electrification have the racial equity lens they need.

As efforts to combat air pollution are dialed back at the federal level, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has already concluded that transportation generates the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions. Air pollution emitted from transportation contributes to smog, which negatively impacts the welfare of everyday Americans. In fact, Chicago ranks 3rd among major cities when it comes to the highest burdens of

childhood asthma from transportation pollution. Unfortunately, Black households have been disproportionately affected by air pollution and lung disease, as highlighted by the current pandemic.

“As we imagine what changes we need to make post-COVID-19, clean air needs to be a priority,” said Angela Tin, ICAN Member and Board Member at Chicago Area Clean Cities (CACC). “The pandemic was worse for those with underlying respiratory conditions that come from a lifetime of smog and air pollution. Investing in clean air is investing in public health.”

As the state takes steps to rebuild its economy, ICAN’s efforts around electrification will create new jobs and save costs for companies and consumers. Other companies and nonprofits that wish to join ICAN can apply at info@ICANIllinois.org.