

Gov. Pritzker Delivers Keynote Speech At The Center For Climate And Energy Solutions (C2ES)

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GLASGOW, SCOTLAND— As Governor Pritzker leads the gubernatorial mission to the United Kingdom to highlight Illinois’ green energy economy, he delivered the keynote address at the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) roundtable. He addressed business leaders and government officials, stressing the urgency of working across sectors and borders to combat the current climate emergency.

Governor Pritzker is part of the largest-ever bipartisan delegation of U.S. states at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). The Governor emphasized Illinois’ nation-leading efforts on climate action, which includes tangible benchmarks:

- **Decarbonization:** Phasing out coal and natural gas by requiring emissions reductions by mandating zero emissions for private coal by 2030 and municipal coal and natural gas by 2045.
- **Transportation:** Putting one million electric vehicles on the road by 2030, providing a \$4,000 electric vehicle rebate for consumers.
- **Renewable energy:** Putting Illinois on the path to 100% clean energy by 2050.
- **Equity:** Making equitable investments in Illinois' new clean energy economy and advancing environmental justice.

More information on Illinois’ climate action is available [here](#).

GOVERNOR PRITZKER’S KEYNOTE SPEECH AT C2ES

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I’m honored to join the largest-ever delegation of U.S. states here at COP26.

There has perhaps been no gathering in our collective history more important or timely than the conversation that brings us here today. I’m thrilled to join you, working across sectors and borders, to explore and expand our collective leadership and partnership on climate change.

There is no question that, right now, our shared future rests on an uneasy fulcrum. The legacy we are prepared to leave our children depends on the people sitting here in this room - leaders who are anxious to lean into generation-shaping work.

Never in human history has the world faced a more urgent climate emergency than the one we face today.

Make no mistake, the days we hoped would never come, the consequences that decades worth of scholars and scientists have warned us about, are here. As the Governor of one of the largest states in the US, I can tell you that not a week goes by where my state is not tackling a crisis or planning for the next one brought on by the effects of climate change. In Illinois in the last two and a half years alone, we've battled a record breaking polar vortex that dropped temperatures to dangerously low levels, 100-year floods that now happen nearly every 12 months across our farm communities and cities, microbursts and tornado cells that destroy buildings, rising water levels on Lake Michigan that threaten livelihoods, property and health in Chicago, extreme heat, and emergency declarations in more than a third of Illinois' counties.

I've lived in Illinois most of my life, and we know how to handle challenging weather. But what we have seen the last few years has made even the longest serving snow plow drivers shake their heads and wonder what's going on.

So we're taking urgent action in pursuit of progress fighting climate change. The people of my state have entrusted me to do everything in my power to keep them safe – and I don't take that responsibility lightly.

In 2019, in my second week in office as governor, I signed Illinois up to become a new member of the US Climate Alliance – a necessary action under a federal administration that, at that time, did everything it could to take the U.S. in the wrong direction when it comes to climate.

In 2021, Illinois is among the Alliance's leaders – not just in the Midwest, but across the United States.

We've put resources behind our climate goals, teeth behind our laws, and hard work behind our aspirations to become one of the nation's most climate friendly states.

A fundamental part of my philosophy of governance is rooted in my own experiences before I ran for Governor: as an entrepreneur and a technology ecosystem builder, where solving problems required a willingness to work collaboratively, creatively and quickly.

Government gets a bad rap in this space because elected leaders often struggle to understand how to make the marriage between the speed and innovation of the private sector and the foundation setting of the public sector work. We need to create a consensus for the work ahead – especially focusing on equity, opportunity, innovation, and community.

In Illinois, that has meant demonstrating that our government is “all in” in the fight to reduce carbon emissions, remove harmful pollutants from the air, double down on

incentivizing renewable energy, retrain workers for the jobs of the future, and anchor it all in the values of ethics, equity, and consumer protections.

We have a history of forward thinking in this arena. Just over half a century ago, Illinois was the first U.S. state to establish an environmental protection agency. So it should perhaps be unsurprising that today, in 2021, Illinois is making history—laying claim to some of the most ambitious and equitable climate and clean energy laws in the United States.

I recently signed a new law to combat climate change from many angles:

- Becoming the first Midwest state to require 100 percent carbon-free energy by 2045, phasing out private coal by 2030 and ALL coal and natural gas by 2045;
- Supporting Illinois' valuable nuclear fleet – the nation's largest – at the lowest cost to the ratepayer, preserving Illinois' bridge to a zero-carbon future;
- Doubling our incentives in renewable energy, making it clear to the world that Illinois is open for business, offering long-term, stable financing;
- Fostering an energy sector that reflects the population it serves, with investments in energy-focused workforce hubs, and a path to prosperity for minority contractors and Illinoisans living in environmental justice communities;
- Setting historic standards for utility accountability – increasing disclosure requirements, protecting ratepayers, and creating a watchdog to ensure the highest level of ethical standards.

And we're doing it all while building on our state's long-time leadership in the American transportation sector to make clear to the world that the Land of Lincoln will help lead the United States' clean transportation revolution.

Already, Illinois is home to the best infrastructure in the U.S., the top national laboratories like Argonne and Fermilab and engineering schools like University of Illinois and Northwestern, and is the epicenter of shipping and logistics innovations. And our state's nation-leading climate action plan offers a robust toolkit to support Electric Vehicle manufacturers and consumers – putting 1 million electric vehicles on the road by 2030, offering \$4,000 electric vehicle rebates for Illinoisans, providing up to an 80 percent rebate to companies for the buildout of charging stations statewide; and now, offering new incentives for the entire EV ecosystem to build facilities, train Illinois graduates, and create jobs.

It all adds up to this: Illinois intends to become the best place in North America to drive and manufacture an electric vehicle.

So to our friends in the private sector in the room: we welcome business leaders and investors like yourselves to join us in Illinois as we build the beating heart of this industry in North America. Help us reduce emissions from the transportation sector and build out the infrastructure of the future.

In 1871 Illinois' great global city was destroyed by the Great Chicago Fire. In the wake of that, Chicago became the most entrepreneurial city in the world as innovators flocked there to begin anew. The renaissance that followed was remarkable as new businesses and new inventions like the skyscraper sprang up almost overnight. Sometimes in the wake of tragedy come the most creative people and ideas.

The greatest test of any generation of leaders is just how willing they are to work to overcome the tragedies that befall them. That is the moment we all find ourselves in. Climate change is here and it is causing tragedy all around us. That's why we are all here today in Glasgow – to own a responsibility we were born into, one that we must carry all of our days. And while I know the challenges in front of us are many. In Illinois our people are known for our hard work. So we bring that determination to the collective fight, joining with you here in Glasgow. I've never been more hopeful about the outcome.