

Illinois EPA Grants Operating Permit to Texas Corporation to Build \$1 Billion Polluting Gas Plant in Central Illinois

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PAWNEE, IL - Today, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) [granted a construction permit](#) to the Texas-based company EmberClear to build the Lincoln Land Energy Center—a massive, polluting gas plant—next to people’s homes and a school in Pawnee, Illinois. The permit granted by the IEPA does not do enough to protect local

residents or the environment from the dangers of methane gas, nor does it provide tangible, timely relief to Illinoisans struggling as a result of surging energy prices. While [states like New York have denied permits](#) that erode state climate commitments, the IEPA has instead granted a permit with inadequate emissions standards for the construction of the Lincoln Land Energy Center. The gas plant will run on methane, a greenhouse gas that traps over 70 times more heat than carbon dioxide, and the permit allows the plant to emit up to 3.5 million tons of dangerous carbon emissions annually. In addition, Sierra Club estimates that “upstream” emissions from the extraction, transport, and storage of methane gas due to leaks and flaring would add over 3 million additional tons of CO2 equivalent. “The IEPA’s decision to grant a permit for another expensive, dirty gas plant while dozens of clean energy projects are under construction and in MISO’s queue is disappointing and contradictory to Illinois’ climate and clean energy goals,” says Jack Darin, Director of Sierra Club Illinois. “Now more than ever, it’s critical that Illinois doubles down on cost-effective clean energy resources that deliver savings to consumers and strengthen our regional power grid. Illinois cannot rely on expensive, risky investments in fossil fuels that put clean energy jobs and our future at risk.” Over the past year, Illinois has rapidly increased the development of clean energy projects in order to combat the climate crisis and create good-paying, equitable clean energy jobs, all while saving money for consumers. Over 1,800 MW of wind and solar energy projects are already under construction in Central and Southern Illinois communities, and over 7,000 MW of solar projects have been waiting for administrative approval from Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), the regional grid operator. Just this week, [MISO approved transmission line upgrades to the electric grid](#) to accelerate the deployment of clean energy resources, improve reliability, and lower costs for consumers. Amidst fossil fuel price spikes that have increased energy market volatility and contributed to the expected bill increases for downstate families, Illinois must accelerate the deployment of these clean energy projects as soon as possible. It is resoundingly clear that clean energy projects are the best resources to strengthen our power grid and deliver consumer savings and price stability, not dirty, expensive gas. Local residents and advocates attended a public hearing in Pawnee and [delivered over 2,000 comments to the IEPA](#) in opposition of the plant. These comments expressed local community members’ concerns about the proposed gas plant’s proximity to people’s homes and schools, as well as long-term concerns about the plant’s effect on public health and the environment. “Illinois is now a national leader on climate and the environment, and yet the state Environmental Protection Agency just issued a permit that is inconsistent with Illinois’ climate commitments,” said Nick Dodson, local resident and Executive Committee member with the Sangamon Valley Group of Sierra Club Illinois. “Building dirty, expensive plants like the Lincoln Land Energy Center are unnecessary given that over 7,000 MW of clean energy projects are in the queue, and many more projects are on the way thanks to the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act’s plan for our 100% clean energy future.” *Sierra Club The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.8 million*

members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.