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VBH BOT FYI Environment

1 message

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Illinois Boosts Solar Energy Targets For Utilities And Homeowners
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Increased Solar Energy Use Reduces Dependence on Traditional Energy Sources.

Governor Pat Quinn today [August 17, 2010] signed legislation that promotes energy independence by furthering the use of solar power by individuals and by industry.

The new laws establish strengthened targets for utilities that will be purchasing more solar energy and help homeowners who want to increase their solar energy usage.

"Solar energy is the wave of the future, and it is important that our public utilities and homeowners are able to more easily increase their use of solar energy," said Governor Quinn. "We must do everything we can to increase our use of solar energy, which will help us protect natural resources and reduce our reliance on traditional energy sources, such as foreign oil."

House Bill 6202, sponsored by Rep. William Burns (D-Chicago) and Sen. Don Harmon (D-Oak Park), amends both the Illinois Power Agency Act and the Public Utilities Act to change the date by which Commonwealth Edison and Ameren must begin purchasing solar energy as part of the renewable energy portfolio requirement.

The new law changes the date to 2012, which is three years earlier than the previous 2015 deadline.

Specifically, the power industry will now be required to purchase .5 percent of its power from solar sources by June 1, 2012; 1.5 percent by June 1, 2013; 3 percent by June 1, 2014; and 6 percent by June 1, 2015, and each year thereafter.

House Bill 5429, sponsored by Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago) and Sen. Michael Noland (D-Elgin), creates the Homeowners' Solar Energy Act to ensure the right of individual homeowners to construct solar energy panels on their homes, provided the individual homeowners follow certain guidelines.

Under the new law, homeowner's associations cannot prohibit homeowners from installing solar panels on their property.

Governor Quinn signed both pieces of legislation at the University of Illinois at Chicago. House Bill 6202 takes effect immediately and House Bill 5429 will take effect Jan. 1, 2011.

Solar power uses the energy from sunlight to generate electricity. Solar energy can be used in smaller, residential settings, and in recent years, multi-megawatt plants have been built.

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