



**Adjustable Block Program
Draft Project Information Release Protocols
23 May 2019**

Responses Due: Friday, May 31, 2019

This document constitutes draft Project Information Release Protocols (“Protocols”) drafted by the Illinois Power Agency to govern the Agency’s ongoing release of information about applicant projects submitted into the Adjustable Block Program.

BACKGROUND

The opening of the Adjustable Block Program demonstrated an unprecedented amount of interest in photovoltaic project development in Illinois. Over 6,000 project applications were received within the first months after program opening. Since then, the Agency has received inquiries seeking information about project applications from media, legislative offices, industry participants, stakeholder organizations, everyday citizens, and others curious about which photovoltaic projects will be developed, at what size, and where across Illinois they will be sited.

To date, the ABP website’s dashboard has provided daily updates about project applications received, reviewed, and approved by the Program Administrator—but only in aggregated form. The IPA’s Lottery Guidelines did require releasing individually-identifying project information for those Group/Category combinations receiving application levels sufficient to trigger a lottery, but similar guidelines have not been developed for other Group/Category combinations (or for that matter applications received after the lottery application window). Additionally, lottery project information was published only for projects designated by the Program Administrator to qualify for selection; no guidelines have been developed to govern what information, if any, is published about project applications *received*, prior to review and approval.

Rather than address inquiries on a piecemeal basis (or only in response to Freedom of Information Act requests), the IPA would prefer instead to make select project information publicly available with updates offered across regular intervals. The IPA has drafted these Draft Project Information Release Protocols to govern what information about applicant and approved projects will be made publicly available, including the form of such disclosures and the intervals for updates.

OBJECTIVE

These Protocols seek to balance the strong public interest in and need for project information with protecting any commercially sensitive or private information (such as personal addresses) contained in project applications. Additionally, these Protocols have been developed with an eye toward information that will ultimately be publicly available regardless of the IPA’s disclosure—whether through GATS or M-RETS tracking system listings, DG Certified Installer annual reports,



local permitting information, satellite views through online maps, or even through visual observation.

The IPA has also looked to other jurisdictions to see how these considerations have been balanced in similar programs, including the Massachusetts SMART program.¹

PROPOSED INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

Project Applications Received

Form: Downloadable spreadsheet from illinoisabp.com website

Updates: Weekly – by 5 p.m. CDT every Friday (or Thursday should Friday be a holiday)

Project Fields: Application ID number; Approved Vendor name, application submission date; project size (AC); project size (DC); zip code; group; category; application status (Part 1 complete, program administrator reviewed, additional information required, submitted to ICC for approval).²

Project Applications Approved by the ICC

Form: Downloadable spreadsheet from illinoisabp.com website

Updates: Within 3 business days after Commission approval of new contracts/batches

Project Fields: Application ID number; Approved Vendor name; contract number; ICC approval date; contract effective date; counterparty utility; application submission date; project size (AC); project size (DC); quantity of RECs under contract; project address (if not Small DG); zip code; city; county; block; category; energization status; tracking system ID number (if energized).

FEEDBACK

The IPA seeks feedback on this proposed approach by **Friday May 31st**; any comments should be sent by email to Brian Granahan at Brian.Granahan@Illinois.gov. While comments may address any aspects of this proposal (including the propriety of project information disclosure generally), comments specifically are sought on whether this approach adequately addresses any concerns Approved Vendors or others may have about private, confidential, or commercially sensitive information found in project applications—including whether revealing information about project applications in process could encourage unwelcome competitive behavior. Additionally, any information about best practices from other jurisdictions’ incentive programs would be particularly instructive. All comments received will be made publicly available unless the commenter specifically requests confidential treatment and submits a confidential and redacted version.

¹ See for example “Applications Update” available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/solar-massachusetts-renewable-target-smart-program>.

² Withdrawn projects would be removed from subsequent spreadsheets.