

Group B Small DG Soft Close, Accessing ComEd CS Portal Before Planned Outage on February 14, Comments on Draft Policy Study Due February 12

February 9, 2024

Next Week in Illinois Shines (Program events & due dates found at the [Vendor Forums & Key Dates webpage](#))

- **Events**
 - Upcoming: Friday, February 23, 2024 - Illinois Power Agency Power Hour - Clean Energy Future for Public Schools at 12:00 p.m. CPT. Please visit this [link](#) to register for the event.
- **Due Dates**
 - Saturday, February 10, 2024 - Invoices must be submitted to the utility
 - Monday, February 12, 2024 - Public comments on the Draft IPA Policy Study due to the Agency
 - Wednesday, February 14, 2024 - Last day to access ComEd CS Portal prior to planned outage

Stakeholder Support

- **Program Administrator Office Hours** – February 14, 2024 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CPT - individual AV or Designee support for Program requirements, portal, application, or other questions. Zoom join link: <https://energy-solution.zoom.us/j/95588710302Co>
- **Application Tips and Tricks** - Supplementing previous guidance, the Program Administrator seeks to continue supporting stakeholders in the avoidance of project applications entering *Need Info* status.
 - **House of Worship Exemption to Prevailing Wage** - A project is exempt from prevailing wage if the project is for a House of Worship and the inverter size is under 100kW AC. To qualify as a House of Worship, the facility must be used exclusively by a religious society or body of persons as a place for religious exercise or religious worship that is exempt from taxation pursuant to Section 15-40 of the Property Tax Code (page 122 of the Guidebook). Proof of exemption is required. A common error observed by the Program Administrator is the submission of this type of non-residential project as “Non-Profit,” which are not exempt from prevailing wage requirements.

Program News – New or Updated Items (All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#))

- **Group B Small Distributed Generation Block Reaches Capacity, Soft Close Period Initiated** – As announced on [February 5, 2024](#), the annual block of capacity for Group B Small Distributed Generation (DG) was reached and a soft close period was initiated, allowing the block to remain open for seven additional calendar days or until the submission of 10 additional megawatts, whichever comes first. The soft close period began on Monday, February 5, 2024, and will extend until **February 13, 2024** at 11:59 p.m. CPT (as February 12 is an Illinois State Holiday honoring Abraham Lincoln’s birthday), or when 10 megawatts have been reached. Any applications batched and submitted to the Program under Group B Small DG block after the soft close capacity is reached OR after February 13, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. CPT will be placed on a waitlist.
- **Illinois Shines Program Holiday Hours** – In observance of upcoming holidays (Abraham Lincoln’s birthday and Presidents’ Day) the Program will have limited services and updates on January 12 and January 19, 2024. The Program’s customer support center and other services will be unavailable these days.
- **New to the Program Website** - The following key additions to www.IllinoisShines.com have been shared:
 - [February 2, 2024 Consumer Protection Working Group meeting minutes](#) ([Consumer Protection Working Group](#) page)

Program News – Previously Published Items (All Program updates can be found on the [Program Updates webpage](#))

- **General Program**
 - **Draft Policy Study Open for Public Comment** – The IPA released a draft version of its 2024 Policy Study on January 22, 2024 for public comment. Stakeholders can visit [this webpage](#) for links to the draft Policy Study, information on the development of the Policy Study, background, approach, and key dates. **Comments are due to the Agency on Monday, February 12, 2024.** Please email all comments to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov.
 - **ComEd Electric Choice ID Implementation and the CS March Quarterly Reporting Period Key Dates** - On [January 16, 2024](#), the Program published information on ComEd’s switch from Account Numbers to Electric Choice ID Numbers, including implementation details and relevant impacts. Key dates for the Illinois Shines CS March Quarterly Reporting Period:
 - **February 14, 2024** – Last day to access ComEd Community Solar Portal prior to planned outage
 - February 15 – 19, 2024 – Planned outage of ComEd Community Solar Portal
 - February 20, 2024 – Planned return of ComEd Community Solar Portal access
 - February 29, 2024 – Deadline for subscription data to be updated
 - March 1, 2024 – Program Administrator pulls reports from ComEd for March 2024 quarterly reporting period
 - March 10, 2024 – Updated subscriber reports due to Program Administrator, which should reflect subscribers as of March 1, 2024
 - **IPA Issues Request for AVs and Installer Designees Interested in Serving Stranded Illinois Shines DG Customers** - As previously [announced](#), the Program continues to review submissions on a rolling basis for entities interested in serving stranded customers, with particular interest in identifying AVs and/or installer Designees willing to assist stranded customers with project maintenance/repair work. Please see the full [Request for AVs and Designees](#), including details regarding the opportunity to support stranded customers, eligibility requirements, and anticipated responsibilities.
 - **Minimum Equity Standard (MES) Year End Report Due July 15, 2024** – Information on the MES Year End Report will be released soon by the Program Administrator, including details on a stakeholder webinar being developed. The MES Year End Report is due July 15, 2024, following the close of this Program Year, and encompasses reporting related to participating entities’ workforce across the 2023-24 Program Year.
- **Traditional Community Solar (TCS)** - See full TCS [hub on Program website](#)
 - **TCS – Part II Demonstration of Project Commitments and Permissible Changes** - See [January 18, 2024](#) announcement.
- **Public Schools Program News** - See full Public Schools [hub on Program website](#)
 - **Public Schools Category Update: Public Act 103-0580 Passed; Higher Education Institutions May Apply** - On December 8, 2023, Governor Pritzker signed Senate Bill 1699 into law as [Public Act 103-0580](#). This statute went into immediate effect on December 8, 2023 and expands the definition of “Public Schools” eligible for the Public Schools category to include Illinois public higher education institutions as defined by the Illinois Board of Higher Education Act. It also requires projects for this category to be located on public school land. The Program is addressing necessary updates to project applications, application processes and support, and other data and reporting impacts for the Public Schools project category resulting from the Public Act. Higher education institutions may apply to this category now, even as updates to the application portal are in process.

- **Illinois Power Agency Power Hour - Clean Energy Future for Public Schools: Benefits and Challenges -**
 The Agency will host the February Power Hour on Friday, **February 23, 2024** at 12:00 p.m. CPT. The Power Hour will cover the following topics: Challenges, opportunities, the Carbon Free Assessment Program, higher education in regards to the [Public Act 103-0580](#), and including solar curriculum in schools. Speakers include: Audrey Steinbach (Senior Program Manager, Illinois Shines at IPA), Mia Korinke (Campaign Mobilization Director at Climate Jobs Illinois), and Ryan Zarembra (Veteran Educator, member of the Illinois Federation of Teachers)). Please visit this [link](#) to register for the event.

Ongoing Operations Updates

- **February REC Invoicing Opened February 1, 2024** - REC invoices and Quarterly Netting Statements were made available for download from AV SharePoint folders on February 1, 2024. Invoices must be submitted to the utility by **February 10, 2024** to receive payment for the February invoice period. Any invoice amounts not submitted to the utility by February 10, 2024 will be carried forward and included in the next invoice period (May 2024).
- **Part II Verification Cut Off for February** - To allow time for invoice calculation and generation, the last valid Part II Verification date for January will be **February 22, 2024**. Applications that are Part II verified on or before February 22, 2024 will be included in the March invoicing period. Application processing will continue throughout the last week of the month and any applications that are reviewed between February 24, 2024 and February 29, 2024 will be invoiced in April 2024.
- **Re-Batching for ICC Meetings** - In advance of each submission of batches to the ICC for approval, AVs are provided the opportunity to withhold or re-batch projects. In the absence of any action by an AV, the Program Administrator will re-batch the projects at their discretion and submit eligible projects to the ICC.
 - **It is extremely important that AVs review their re-batching files on SharePoint to indicate any re-batching preferences, but especially requests to withhold projects from submission.** The Program Administrator alerts AVs by email when they have projects that are eligible for re-batching and planned to be submitted to the ICC in the next memo. Unfortunately, sometimes these communications are missed, and projects are submitted to the ICC despite an AVs intent to hold a project back.
 - The Program Administrator requests that AVs who believe they may want to withhold or re-batch projects mark their calendars and review SharePoint folders for re-batching templates. This way, if any email alerts are missed, AVs are still aware of the dates that re-batching opens and can check if any projects are in the upcoming ICC submission. Below are re-batching windows for the first half of 2024:

Re-Batching Opens for AVs	Election Deadline – 12:00 p.m. CPT (Re-batching closes for AVs)	Trade Date (ICC Meeting Date)
2/20/2024	2/22/2024	3/7/2024
3/5/2024	3/7/2024	3/21/2024
3/19/2024	3/21/2024	4/4/2024
4/2/2024	4/4/2024	4/18/2024
4/16/2024	4/18/2024	5/2/2024
4/30/2024	5/2/2024	5/16/2024
5/13/2024	5/15/2024	5/30/2024
5/17/2024	5/21/2024	6/5/2024
6/3/2024	6/5/2024	6/20/2024

Application Processing Updates

- **Reminder that Project Submissions to Group A Still Encouraged** – See prior [announcement](#).
- **Extended Application Processing Times** – The Program Administrator has returned Part II application processing times back to within the two-week expected turnaround time. Part I application processing times remain extended, and the Program Administrator anticipates processing all remaining Part I applications for this Program Year near the end of February. As a reminder, AVs may continue to submit Part I applications to be placed on the waitlist for next Program Year.
- **Application Processing Tables** - Application processing tables are maintained at IllinoisShines.com/project-application-reports/. These tables are updated daily. For questions about specific project applications, please contact the Program Administrator at admin@IllinoisShines.com.

Ongoing Program Portal Updates

- Ongoing portal updates, a Portal Development Roadmap, and a library of help guides can be found at <https://illinoisshines.com/portal-updates/>. Portal releases will take place on Tuesday nights. Stakeholders can refer to the Portal Updates page to view the latest market facing enhancements.
- **Updates on Portal Issues, Improvements, and Future Releases** – Scheduled system maintenance windows continue on **Tuesday and Thursday evenings (from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. CPT)**, during which times the Portal is expected to be unavailable to users, which the Program hopes is minimally disruptive to Program participants. **Users working in the portal should save their work prior to the 8:00 p.m. CPT start of system maintenance window, as any unsaved information will be lost when the system is moved into maintenance mode.** In some cases, Portal availability may resume earlier than 11:00 p.m. CPT, though **AVs and Designees should plan on the full three hours.**

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Enhancements, Features and Bug Fixes		
DG Disclosure Form Portal Forms Bugfix: Generic Error Message prevents actionable validation errors from displaying	This enhancement applies to error messaging within the "Project Design Specifications" section of DG Disclosure Forms. Previously, if any required fields were left blank, the Disclosure Form would give a generic pop-up error message. The Disclosure Form will now highlight the specific fields that were missed and how to rectify any mistakes that were made.	February 7, 2024
Show file names for attached documents	The names of attached files will be displayed below the file type in the documents section of Part I and Part II applications. This will help AVs and application processors know which file is attached.	February 7, 2024
PPA & Lease Annual Escalation Rate Guidance	This enhancement will add more accurate in field example guidance for the Annual Escalation Rate field in the PPA and Lease Disclosure Forms. By providing more accurate guidance, the Program Administrator should see less errors in PPA & Lease Disclosure Forms and more accurate estimate savings values in the PDF.	February 7, 2024
PPA Disclosure Form PDF Cosmetic Update: PPA Rates stored in \$/kWh (x.xxxxx \$/kWh) on the rate should display in cents/kWh (xxx.xxx Cents/kWh)	This enhancement applies to the PPA Disclosure Form in the way the first payment and final payment rates are displayed in the PDF document. The first and final payments will be displayed in cents rather than dollars.	February 7, 2024

Development Focus	Details	Planned or Actual Delivery
Associate Disclosure Form PDFs on S3 to Disclosure Form ID	This ticket will associate all the PDF copies of the CS Workaround Disclosure Form loaded to S3 to the Workaround Disclosure Form data that was loaded to the Portal. Once released, the view the CS Disclosure Form on the Portal will also have the Disclosure Form as a signed copy (If the Disclosure Form PDFs do not have signatures for any Disclosure Form, they will still show under 'signed' as they were expected to be completed and signed. During the Program Administrators review they will reach out to AVs or Designees in case signatures are missing).	February 7, 2024

Requirements and Reminders

- **Stakeholder Feedback** - This table outlines current and forthcoming proposals and feedback requests, which can also be found [at the Program website](#):

Proposal or Feedback Topic and Link to Details	Request for Comment Released	Deadline for Comment	Results or Updates to Request
Draft Policy Study Open for Public Comment	January 22, 2024	February 12, 2024	On January 22, the IPA released the preliminary draft version of its 2024 Policy Study for public comment. Comments are due to the Agency on Monday, February 12. Please email all comments to IPA.ContactUs@illinois.gov.
AV Application Stakeholder Feedback	December 8, 2023	January 11, 2024	AV Application will be updated once the final 2024 Long-Term Plan is published.
Draft 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan	August 15, 2023	September 29, 2023	The filed 2024 Long-Term Plan and Redline between the Draft 2024 Plan and Filed 2024 Plan, along with stakeholder comments for Chapter 7, 9, and 10 have been posted at the Program's website; all other comments have been shared at the Agency's website.

- **Long-Term Plan Update** - As announced on [October 23, 2023](#), the IPA filed the 2024 Long-Term Plan with the ICC on October 20, 2023. Stakeholders can engage with the filed 2024 Long-Term Plan in [Docket 23-0714](#) following the ICC's rules of practice. Please keep in mind that the filed 2024 Plan is not finalized upon filing and anything contained within the Plan should be considered preliminary. On January 16, 2024, the Commission issued a [Proposed Order](#), which can be accessed via its eDocket. The Agency expects a final order from the ICC approving the 2024 Long-Term Plan no later than February 20, 2024, which will contain the final determination on any contested issues. The Agency will subsequently publish a final 2024 Long-Term Plan in compliance with that final order, marking the conclusion of this process. Stakeholders can access the [filed 2024 Long-Term Plan](#) and [Redline between Draft 2024 Long-Term Plan and Filed 2024 Long-Term Plan](#) on the [Program Documents page](#) on the website.

CONTACT US: For portal, application, or Program-specific questions and inquiries, please contact admin@IllinoisShines.com or call 877-783-1820.