

# Alert: An Energy and Utilities Hot Topic



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## Emerging energy policies provide catalyst to Midwest solar growth

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Due to various meteorological, political, and financial drivers, utility-scale solar development may have seemed like a distant opportunity for those of us living in the Midwest — only relevant for our sunnier neighbors of the Southwest. The Midwest has historically been a leader in renewable energy development, but the impetus has been centered on large-scale wind farms and agriculture-based biomass-to-energy systems. The application of these technologies has greatly assisted Midwest-based utilities reduce emissions, lower carbon impacts, and generally support greater energy independence. However, the lack of solar energy production has limited the region's potential for continued energy leadership on the national scale. Promising solar technology advances and a paradigm shift in state-level renewable energy policies have created an emerging (and substantial) market opportunity for solar energy development in the Midwest.

The State of Illinois recently passed legislation to increase requirements for solar energy purchases by its electric utilities (including the two large investor owned utilities, Commonwealth Edison and Ameren Corporation). Under the new legislation, which was signed into law by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn on August 17, 2010, the utilities will have to purchase six percent of their power from solar resources by 2015, with ramp up provisions beginning in 2012 at 0.5 percent. Governor Quinn promoted the newly signed legislation as follows: "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."

### What does this mean to Baker Tilly and our clients?

The solar provisions within the updated Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) will create a market for solar power development in Illinois and the surrounding states. Provisions within the legislation indicate preference must be given to procurement of in-state (and neighboring state) solar energy production. This mandated market will require substantial and aggressive build-up of solar energy generation throughout the Midwest, and is a prime opportunity for entrepreneurs and public utilities alike to consider solar investments.

### How can we help?

At Baker Tilly, "green" is more than a buzzword. It is the color of opportunity for domestic and global businesses confronted with unparalleled market opportunities in renewable energy and clean technology. Our specialists help you navigate the transactional, compliance, and operational challenges associated with sustainability initiatives.

Connect with us for more information on our renewable energy services at [bakertilly.com/renewable-energy](http://bakertilly.com/renewable-energy).

Questions?  
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