

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2026

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Russ Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20503

Secretary Wright and Director Vought:

We write to urge the immediate restoration of 33 energy grants totaling more than \$583 million awarded to the State of Illinois and later terminated unlawfully by the Department of Energy (DOE) at the direction of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Beginning in October 2025, DOE cancelled 284 grants, including 33 in Illinois, all but one of which were awarded to politically Democratic states. DOE officials acknowledged this in recent court documents, stating that the grant terminations were determined “based solely on the political identity of the grant recipient’s state” and that “with one exception, the 284 terminated grants had a recipient location and/or at least one place of performance in a state that awarded its electoral votes to Kamala Harris in the 2024 election and has two Democratic-caucusing Senators.” By your Administration’s own admission, you punished the state of Illinois purely as an act of political retribution and at no advantage to the taxpayer.

As if this brazen politicization of DOE’s grant-making process were not bad enough, these cancellations also took aim at our constituents’ wallets. Average household energy bills in Illinois rose by \$210 in 2025, and that number is expected to increase further by the end of 2026. As Artificial Intelligence data centers—welcomed and unchecked by your Administration—demand a growing quantity of electricity, bills are projected to rise even higher. In fact, Illinois officials warn that without action, the state may experience power shortfalls as soon as 2029. To combat the deluge of new demand, Illinois needs additional power generation, expanded energy storage, and upgrades to its electrical grid. The grants you terminated would have assisted in the deployment of these technologies and created hundreds of jobs. One such grant would have provided \$50 million to Rockford, Illinois, to modernize its grid infrastructure and train new technicians to service those upgrades. Instead of enabling this progress in Rockford and across Illinois, your shortsighted, vindictive policy inflicted higher prices on our constituents. The terminations make clear that OMB and DOE are willing to sacrifice the well-being of Americans to punish the President’s perceived political enemies.

And these harms go beyond Illinoisans’ wallets. So far this year, a record-breaking 220 tornadoes have touched down in our state—more than the next two highest states combined. These weather events deal incredible damage to our electric grid, knocking out power for hundreds of thousands of residents. Power outages put lives at risk, and they are avoidable. Smart investments in grid upgrades, like those of the grants you terminated, could mitigate some of these harms. In one instance, you terminated a grant to the City of Naperville intended to improve the management of its small-scale, distributed generation. Reliable distributed generation is a valuable tool for grid operators in the aftermath of severe weather, and your

callous terminations weakened Naperville's ability to respond to the frequent storms of recent months. Without these grants, the burden falls on Illinois ratepayers to fund the repairs and upgrades needed to handle these historic storms. Repeated damage to Illinois' grid infrastructure also increases demand for critical electrical components like distribution transformers, exacerbating already severe supply chain shortages that affect every state. The U.S. electric grid is complex and interregional, and it does not distinguish between political parties. Your partisan attacks on Illinois are just as likely to raise prices or extend repair timelines in Wisconsin, Indiana, or Iowa the next time they face a tornado or flood.

It is incumbent upon DOE to take a wide view of and responsibility for the health of our nation's energy systems. Through these grant terminations, you have demonstrated a complete failure to understand this basic principle of DOE's mission. To begin rectifying this unprecedented political attack, we demand that you restore all 33 of the DOE grants cancelled in Illinois as a part of these mass terminations.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



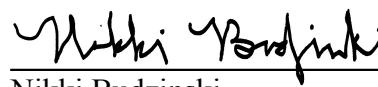
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



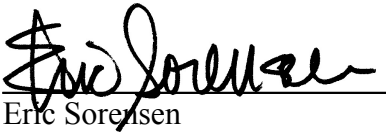
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



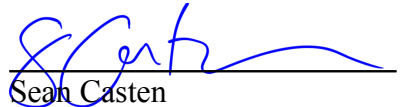
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



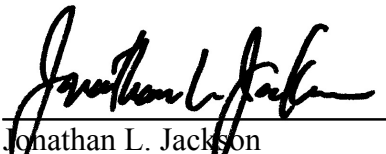
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



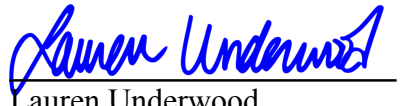
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress