



MEDIA CONTACT

Sarah Bray	Emily Claghorn (LS2 Group)
832.319.6340 office	515.422.9293 office
832.226.2116 cell	515.720.5709 cell
sbray@cleanlineenergy.com	eclaghorn@ls2group.com

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION APPROVES THE ROCK ISLAND CLEAN LINE TRANSMISSION PROJECT IN ILLINOIS

APPROVAL MARKS A CRITICAL MILESTONE NEEDED TO DELIVER LOW-COST WIND ENERGY TO ILLINOIS AND STATES FARTHER EAST

CHICAGO (November 25, 2014) – Rock Island Clean Line LLC (Rock Island Clean Line), an affiliate of Clean Line Energy Partners LLC (Clean Line), is pleased to announce that the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) unanimously approved an Order granting Rock Island Clean Line a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to construct and operate the Illinois portion of a new 500-mile direct current electric power line. The Rock Island Clean Line will deliver 3,500 megawatts of low-cost wind power from the greater northwest Iowa area to Illinois.

“Nothing is more fundamental to a healthy economy than the availability of reliable energy, its availability and cost profoundly affect every aspect of our economy,” said Todd Maisch, President of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. “A diversity of electricity supply has major benefits, and growth in renewable energy creates more options for consumers. Companies like Clean Line that propose electric transmission projects are forced to meet a high threshold to prove that their energy project serves the public need and benefits consumers. Now that the Commission has found that the Rock Island project is needed, we look forward to seeing the project move forward.”

“The ICC approval is a great step forward for the Rock Island Clean Line project and brings Illinois one step closer to creating a cleaner energy future,” said Michael Skelly, President of Clean Line Energy. “We are grateful to the Commission for their careful consideration of our application and proposed route. By approving game-changing projects like the Rock Island Clean Line, Illinois will benefit from access to low-cost clean energy and job creation in the construction and manufacturing sectors.”

The Rock Island Clean Line will decrease the annual cost of wholesale electricity used to serve Illinois customers by an estimated \$320 million in its first year of operation alone. Additional economic benefits in Illinois include a direct investment of approximately \$600 million in the state, creation of hundreds of jobs to construct the transmission line, and job support in the manufacturing sector for the wind turbines that will provide power for the line.

Clean Line will use the services of local vendors, such as construction materials suppliers, and previously announced an MOU with Southwire, Inc., to purchase conductor (wire) for the project to be manufactured at Southwire’s Flora, Illinois, facility. The Rock Island Clean Line will also generate millions of dollars in local government revenues annually for counties, schools, fire districts, and other community services where the line and converter station are located.



“Building Owners support the development of open, competitive and transparent retail and wholesale energy markets and want a regulatory environment that attracts new market entrants that can add choices for Illinois consumers purchasing electricity,” said Michael Cornicelli, Executive Vice President of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Chicago, or BOMA. “This project should demonstrate that independent, investor-driven transmission infrastructure can become a viable business solution in a traditionally utility-driven arena.”

Rock Island Clean Line submitted the application and proposed route to the Illinois Commerce Commission in October 2012 after coordinating more than two years of routing work. Over those two years, project representatives met with landowners, environmental agencies, government officials and other stakeholders to gather feedback, collected thousands of routing comments and considered hundreds of different potential routing alternatives. The route approved today was the route filed by Clean Line as the preferred route and received no objections from ICC staff.

Clean Line is committed to continuing to work with landowners and will compensate landowners fairly. Clean Line will provide easement payments and structure payments that can be made annually or up-front, at the landowner’s option, plus any damage payments.

Scott County, Iowa, landowner Ron Schnoor has signed an easement agreement with Clean Line. “I like this project,” said Schnoor. “Our nation needs the energy, and Clean Line’s compensation for landowners is fair. I’m pleased to see the Illinois approval, and look forward to the Iowa Utilities Board process moving forward shortly as well.”

The wind energy delivered by the Rock Island Clean Line will allow other generators to run less and burn less fuel by eliminating the need for the equivalent amount of energy to come from fossil fuels, thereby reducing pollution. More than 1.4 million homes will be powered by the renewable energy generated as a result of this project.

"This project will deliver pollution-free power to Illinois homes and businesses, and create good jobs in clean energy technologies," said Jack Darin, Director of the Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter. "We applaud the Illinois Commerce Commission for their approval of this project, and all of their efforts to bring clean energy investment, consumer savings, and cleaner air to Illinois."

The Rock Island Clean Line project continues to make progress on other required approvals as well. In May 2012, Rock Island Clean Line obtained a key regulatory approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to begin negotiating transmission service agreements with potential customers. Rock Island Clean Line has also received required licenses from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Developing a project of this scale is a long-term undertaking, and Clean Line seeks to develop the Rock Island Clean Line in a responsible, transparent manner, with input from many stakeholders.

The full text of the final order is expected to be available within the next several days.

1001 MCKINNEY, SUITE 700 HOUSTON, TX 77002 TEL 832.319.6310 FAX 832.319.6311

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To learn more about the Rock Island Clean Line, please visit www.RockIslandCleanLine.com.

About Clean Line Energy Partners: Clean Line's mission is to connect abundant, renewable energy resources to areas that have a high demand for clean, reliable energy. Clean Line is developing a series of transmission projects to move renewable energy to market. For more information, please visit www.CleanLineEnergy.com.