



Chicago Set To Become First Major US City To Be Powered 100% By Renewable Electricity

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Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced this week that the city has committed to ensure all government buildings will be powered by 100% renewable electricity by 2025, which would make the city the country's largest major city to power all their public buildings from 100% renewable electricity.



Rahm Emanuel atop Shedd Aquarium

The announcement was made by Rahm Emanuel atop the roof of Shedd Aquarium, which has recently installed more than 900 solar panels in an effort to cut its energy use by 50% by 2020. Mayor Emanuel was joined by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Forest Claypool, Chicago Park District CEO Mike Kelly, Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Eugene Jones, Jr., Fleet and Facility Management Commissioner David Reynolds, and City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) leadership. Collectively, these public organizations used nearly 1.8 kilowatt hours of electricity in 2016 — approximately 8% of all electricity use in Chicago, and the equivalent of around 295,000 Chicago homes.

The Chicago commitment will make use of a combination of renewable energy credits, utility-supplied renewable energy, and on-site generation, with initial purchases set to begin in 2018 and 2019.

“As the Trump administration pulls back on building a clean energy economy, Chicago is doubling down,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “By committing the energy used to power our public buildings to wind and solar energy, we are sending a clear signal that we remain committed to building a 21st-century economy here in Chicago.”

It's been a big last 7 days for Chicago, having earlier this week been awarded a 2017 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Award by the US Environmental Protection Agency for the city's contributions to protecting the environment through energy efficiency. Mayor Emanuel also announced the city's Smart Lighting Project will start on the South and West Sides of the city this summer. The project is intending to replace 270,000 of Chicago's light fixtures and add a new management system that will provide the city a state-of-the-art smart lighting grid.

"Today's action is a historic step forward in establishing Chicago as a clean energy leader," added Jack Darin, Illinois Sierra Club President.

"By moving boldly to repower its public buildings with renewable energy like wind and solar, Chicago is leading by example at a time when local leadership is more important than ever.

"While President Trump and his administration would reverse America's progress on climate change and clean energy, Mayor Emanuel is ensuring that Chicago will move forward, and that its residents will benefit from the good jobs and cleaner air that come from renewable energy projects. We look forward to working with the Mayor, community leaders, and the people of Chicago to achieve this bold goal on the path to eventually powering all of Chicago with 100% clean energy."