



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2022

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE 100% CLEAN,
RENEWABLE ENERGY STARTING IN 2025**

Agreement makes Chicago one of the largest cities to commit to clean energy and reduce carbon footprint by more than 290,000 metric tons per year

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS) visited the Chicago Urban League to announce an agreement with retail electricity supplier Constellation, in collaboration with Swift Current Energy, to help meet the Mayor's commitment to purchase renewable energy for all City facilities and operations by 2025, making Chicago one of the largest cities in the country to do so. The agreement also includes important workforce development and equity commitments.

"I am incredibly proud to advance this commitment to transitioning all city operations to 100% renewable energy by 2025," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The signing of this agreement demonstrates that the City of Chicago is leading by example and driving high-impact climate action, building the clean energy workforce of the future and equitably distributing meaningful benefits to foster the local clean energy economy for all."

Key terms of the contract include:

- The City has signed an energy supply agreement with an initial five-year term with Constellation beginning in January 2023.
- As part of the agreement with Constellation, beginning in 2025, the City will partially source its large energy uses such as the airports, Harold Washington Library Center and Jardine Water Purification Plant with clean, renewable energy from a new solar generation installation currently being developed by Swift Current Energy in downstate Sangamon and Morgan counties.
- Construction of the solar project is expected to start before the end of 2022 and is anticipated to create hundreds of jobs in Illinois.
- The City will also procure Renewable Energy Credits from other sources for its remaining power uses, such as small and medium-sized buildings and streetlights.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- Swift Current Energy will own and operate Double Black Diamond Solar, which at 593 megawatts, is expected to be one of the largest solar projects in Illinois to date.

The project will also be a source of renewable energy to other major organizations in Illinois.

“We are providing a clean energy solution that will help the City of Chicago significantly reduce its carbon footprint and make a tangible, positive impact in the fight against climate change,” said Jim McHugh, Chief Commercial Officer, Constellation. “As we work with our customers to implement sustainability initiatives, it is especially important that we help underserved and under-resourced communities participate in the transition to a carbon free future. We look forward to collaborating with Swift Current Energy to bring this project to life for the City of Chicago.”

Matt Birchby, Co-Founder and President, Swift Current Energy, said, “We are thrilled to have the City of Chicago as a key customer for the Double Black Diamond Solar project. At 593 megawatts, Double Black Diamond Solar has the capacity to create significant benefits for the State of Illinois. We commend the City of Chicago for their leadership in securing 100% clean, renewable energy for all City buildings and operations and Sangamon and Morgan Counties for hosting this project. As the long-term owner and operator of Double Black Diamond Solar, Swift Current Energy will continue to strengthen our relationships with the project customers, Constellation and the host communities to ensure the benefits of the project are robust and long-lasting.”

Sangamon County Board Chairman Andy Van Meter said, “Double Black Diamond makes Sangamon County a leading generator of clean solar power. We are pleased to host an infrastructure project of this magnitude that will create meaningful and long-lasting benefits for our area and the state. The project will employ hundreds of construction workers and directly create permanent, high paying positions. It will also create a significant, long-term source of tax revenue for our schools and community.”

This agreement, the culmination of a competitive procurement process that started with a September 2020 request for proposals by AIS, is a major step in reducing Chicago’s carbon footprint and accelerating the transition to clean, renewable energy outlined in the 2022 Chicago Climate Action Plan (CAP). The 2022 CAP details an interim 62% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 through direct investment and action by the City of Chicago. By procuring solar energy for city operations, Chicago is expected to reduce its carbon footprint by more than



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



290,000 metric tons each year, equivalent to emissions associated with 62,000 passenger vehicles, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates. The City's participation in Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge helped the City, through technical advisors, in designing this process.

"As the owner or operator of over 425 facilities city-wide, including City Hall and one of the world's busiest airports, it is imperative that we as city leaders take all measures necessary to decarbonize our assets and to mitigate the disastrous effects of climate change," said Sandra Blakemore, Acting Commissioner for AIS. "AIS is pleased to have collaborated with Constellation and Swift Current Energy to achieve a monumental milestone for the City of Chicago, while also concentrating on our multifaceted approach to a clean energy transition including the electrification of our fleet and the retrofits of our building portfolio."

The City's innovative procurement process scored respondents based on key elements such as the community benefits of the proposal and each respondent's ability to facilitate the construction of new renewable energy in Illinois. As a result, Constellation, in collaboration with Swift Current Energy, have made financial commitments under the agreement to help fund job training; apprenticeships; educational and/or other programs in Chicago that focus on the development of a diverse, clean energy; and sustainability-focused workforce. This approach will enable innovative local and equitable co-benefits agreements that will fund community climate infrastructure projects and workforce development training. In addition, all parties will actively work toward Double Black Diamond Solar project's compliance with the utility-scale renewables diverse workforce and labor requirements of the state Clean Economy Jobs Act (CEJA), including a project labor agreement, paying prevailing wages, and ensuring a minimum of 10% of the project workforce are equity-eligible individuals.

"The Chicago Urban League commends the City on achieving its ambitious goal while ensuring that workforce development is prioritized through a new community benefits agreement," said Karen Freeman Wilson, President, and CEO of the Chicago Urban League. "One of the ways the League works to advance economic equity is by preparing people from underserved communities for in-demand jobs that ensure they can participate in the future economy. Over the past few years, more than 200 individuals have gone through our solar panel installation training program, and some of our graduates were incredibly proud to be part of the team that completed one of the largest solar projects in Chicago earlier this year — the installation of a solar roof and carport at our headquarters. Being a part of the renewable energy workforce will change lives."



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



The City of Chicago plans to apply for the Illinois Power Agency’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) “Self-Direct” credit program made available through CEJA. The Self-Direct program provides eligible large energy consumers like the City with an electricity bill credit for REC purchases from qualified wind and solar resources. The program promotes large scale REC purchases to help Illinois meet its statewide RPS targets. The City is committed to reinvesting its Self-Direct program bill credit funds to continue the decarbonization of its own municipal buildings and fleet. The City has already begun transitioning its fleet to all-electric vehicles with a commitment to a full transition by 2035. Additionally, the City has allocated dollars in the Chicago Recovery Plan to accelerate energy retrofits and renewable energy generation, beginning with libraries in historically underserved communities on the South and West sides.

“Chicago is thrilled to leverage our buying power to develop more equitable outcomes for the renewable energy market here in the State of Illinois,” said Angela Tovar, Chief Sustainability Officer. “The City of Chicago is proud to execute strategies that demonstrate our commitment to the goals outlined in CEJA including delivering community benefits to residents and reinvesting funding to spur more renewable energy deployment within the city limits.”

As a next step, AIS and the Chief Sustainability Officer will also lead strategic planning to identify opportunities to encourage additional local, distributed renewable generation, city asset energy efficiency projects, and energy storage in the city itself. This process supports future targets of gradually reducing market purchases of RECs in achieving the goal of running all City operations on 100% renewable energy and ensuring all electricity consumed in Chicago is sourced from clean, renewable sources by 2035.

###