

January 13, 2024

What the HEC
is happening
at the Statehouse?



Dear HEC Supporter,

It's a new year and the Hoosier Environmental Council is busy jumping into the 2024 Legislative Session. We have a lot to share with you and will be working to keep you updated and engaged during this "short" session.

One of our top priorities is enabling local community solar, which would be possible with one of the bills we're watching - HB 1193. Read on to learn how we're working to protect Indiana's wetlands, ways to take action this week, a new position at HEC, upcoming events, and more.

Take Action for Community Solar

Indiana has a power system operated by vertically integrated, monopoly, investor-owned utilities. That means companies like Duke Energy, AES, and NIPSCO control all aspects of providing our electricity. Utilities across the nation have fought against community solar because they see it as a threat to their market share and related profits. The truth is our 100-year-old system of providing power through far away, fossil fuel-based power plants isn't going to meet Hoosier's growing energy demands.

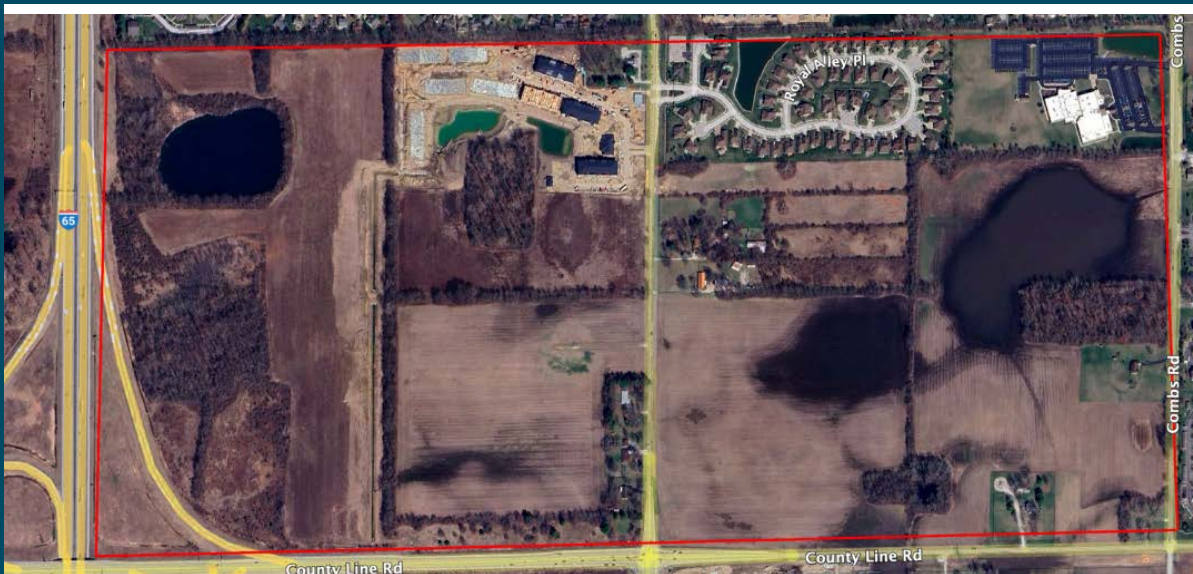
We need local power in addition to clean, renewable centralized power, battery storage, and other forms of clean, continuous power. But not everyone can access solar – they may rent rather than own, have a house not suitable for solar, or may not be able to afford the upfront costs. **Community solar breaks down those barriers.**

The Hoosier Environmental Council is working in coalition with [Hoosiers for Community Solar](#) to bring community solar to Indiana. We need your help too. We're asking HEC supporters to contact your state legislators about the importance of community solar for Indiana. This is especially important given that this Legislative Session, Rep. Carey Hamilton (D-Indianapolis) has introduced [HB 1193](#), which would support independent community solar!

Contact your Legislators

HEC is committed to supporting Indiana's transition to clean renewable energy. **When we see a bill that could slow that transition, we take notice and take action.** [HB 1382](#) contains language that could slow the planned closing of coal fired power plants. A similar bill was recently passed in Kentucky - [check out this editorial](#) explaining the bill by Sam Carpenter, HEC's Executive Director. HEC will be talking with the bill's author and will keep you updated on how best to support Indiana's transition to clean renewable energy and limit the special interests of the coal lobby.

HEC Community Mobilizes for Wetlands



Developer Gershman Partners is applying for an Isolated Wetland Permit to impact a Class III wetland in southern Indianapolis along I-65 South and County Line Road. Class III wetlands are the highest-quality wetlands in Indiana. Residents have enjoyed the scenery of the wetlands and open space, and the wildlife they support, including sandhill cranes, bald eagles, and owls. This wetland is part of a greater wetland ecosystem – about 45 acres – that will be developed into speculative warehouses.

Susie McGovern, HEC's Senior Water Policy Associate, has been leading the effort to ultimately deny the permit request to protect these wetlands. Hoosiers understand the value of wetlands and this was demonstrated when HEC collected nearly [3,000 signatures on our letter](#) to Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) requesting a denial for the wetland permit and a public hearing. Thank you to the many who have signed, or shared, the letter.

HEC's efforts have garnered media attention with three articles published in [Daily Journal](#), [Public News Service](#), and [Mirror Indy](#) that highlight the need to protect these wetlands.

The potential loss of wetlands at this property is a clear example of the need for better state wetland policy. Read more about this in [our recent blog](#) and keep an eye on wetlands-related bills on our [2024 Bill Watch page](#). Currently, there are two bills to look out for:

- [SB 246](#): HEC supports Sen. Sue Glick's (R-LaGrange) SB 246 related to wetland property tax incentives
- [HB 1383](#): Rep. Alan Morrison (R- Brazil) has introduced HB 1383, which contains some concerning language. HEC is closely reviewing this legislation before taking a stance.

You can also [send your own letter](#) to legislators and reiterate the value of wetlands to Indiana water resources.

[Read the Letter to IDEM Here](#)

[Contact your Legislators](#)

Central Indiana Residents: Last Chance to Submit Comments to CIRDA

[The Central Indiana Regional Development Authority](#) (CIRDA) received \$1 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to form a plan to address greenhouse emissions (GHG) and other air pollution. After the priority action plan is submitted this Spring, CIRDA will compete for \$4.6 billion nationally for plan implementation this coming April. After reviewing initial feedback, CIRDA has opened up a second, more focused survey is for public input.

We need CIRDA to hear from **YOU**. Complete the [Central Indiana regional survey](#) by this Sunday, January 14th, to submit your priorities and the community benefits you value most.

[Read our Recommendations](#)

[Take the Survey](#)

We're Hiring - Check out our New Position!

The Hoosier Environmental Council seeks a [Mounds Greenway Coordinator in Madison or Delaware County](#) to support the promotion, implementation, and expansion of the Mounds Greenway plan in East Central Indiana. HEC seeks a leader, organizer, and coalition builder who is well-versed in community trails and related issues.

Please feel free to share this job posting with anyone you think would be, or know, a good candidate for the role.



[See the Posting](#)

Green Business Spotlight

[Singer Wealth Advisory of Raymond James](#) has been a long-time Green Business partner for many years. They offer thoughtful financial services with a focus on sustainable investing, also known as ESG investing. Sustainable investing is a powerful tool for addressing global challenges important to you while achieving personal financial goals. We are so grateful for their support and for being an HEC Green Business. Thank you, Singer Wealth Advisory of



Raymond James!

Thank you to our growing list of [HEC Green Business partners](#) who are role models for environmental stewardship in Indiana. We encourage you to support businesses that support HEC! Contact [Mary Brock](#), HEC's Grants and Green Business Manager, with any questions about our [Green Business program](#).

HEC in the News

- "[Petition against southside Indianapolis industrial park garners 2,300 signatures](#)", with Susie McGovern, Daily Journal, January 11, 2024.
- "[Wetlands at stake in southside Indy industrial development](#)", with Susie McGovern and Indra Frank, Public News Service, January 8, 2024.
- "[Development would destroy Franklin Township wetlands following erosion of state protections](#)", with Susie McGovern, Mirror Indy, January 5, 2024.
- "[City's carbon-credit plan is delayed but still a go](#)", with Delaney Barber, Indiana Business Journal, January 5, 2024.
- "[No Coal for Christmas](#)," by Sam Carpenter, Indiana Capitol Chronicle, December 18, 2023.

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Check out these Upcoming Events

Check out these upcoming environmental events:

- **January 16th:** IN This Together: Uniting Hoosiers for Our Future, 11am-1pm, [Indiana Statehouse, Fourth Floor South Atrium](#)
- **January 20th:** Eco-Justice and Wellness Expo 1pm-4:30pm, [Hayden Hall, Friends UCC](#)
- **January 23rd:** 2024 Conservation Day at the Statehouse, All Day, [Indiana Statehouse](#)
- **January 23rd:** ELPC Thinks: Electric School Buses Fueling Clean Energy & Clean Rides for Kids, 2pm-3pm, [Zoom](#)
- **January 25th:** Indy Health District Public Open House, 3pm-8pm, [The Children's Museum of Indianapolis](#)

Indiana's 2024 Legislative Session is underway! Check out these opportunities to connect with your state legislators at a "Third House Meeting" near you:

- **January 13th:**
 - Vanderburgh County, 9-11am, [Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library](#)
 - Vigo County, 10-12pm, [Vigo County Public Library](#)
- **January 20th:** Owen County, 7:30-9am, [Owen Valley Christian Fellowship](#)
- **January 26th:** St. Joseph County, 12-1pm, [The History Museum](#)
- **January 27th:** Brown County, 9:30-11am, [Zoom](#)

[See More HEC Events](#)

STAY CONNECTED



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