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Illinois Clean Ports Program: Local Community Engagement Continues to Improve Sustainability and Resilience in Near Port Communities

Springfield, IL -- Illinois EPA Director James Jennings is pleased to announce the Illinois Clean Ports Program's next round of in-person meetings for stakeholders and near-port communities continuing the planning process to decarbonize ports with cleaner vehicle technologies and supporting energy infrastructure.

For meeting details and to register, visit the Illinois Clean Ports Program website at illinoiscleanports.org. The scheduled meetings will take place:

- **Tuesday September 22, 2026** at 6:30 p.m. for Mid-America Intermodal Authority Port District in Quincy, IL.
- **Wednesday September 23, 2026** at 6:30 p.m. for port districts within the Illinois Waterway Ports Commission in Havana, IL.
- **Thursday September 24, 2026** at 6:30 p.m. for Upper Mississippi River International Port District in Savanna, IL.

"Successful clean port planning starts with listening to the people who understand the unique challenges Illinois' inland port operations face and who understand the needs of these communities the best, and those are the people who live and work there," explains **Dennis Esquivel, Illinois EPA EV Program Grants Manager**. "Their feedback is critical for developing solutions that are not only environmentally meaningful, but also practical, reliable, and responsive to local needs. By engaging in these conversations, IEPA hopes we can discover new opportunities to help move these operations forward together, with cleaner technologies and more modern, reliable infrastructure."

This next round of meetings will build on the initial kickoff sessions and decarbonization strategies for each port district. During the meeting series through the end of 2027, stakeholders and community members will collaborate to create resiliency and decarbonization plans for each port district and set goals to reduce energy use and emissions, recommend strategies for community development, and identify funding and implementation strategies. - more -

“The first round of meetings demonstrated how deeply people care about the future of Illinois’ waterways. As these meetings continue, we encourage residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to continue to voice their perspectives to help inform this planning process,” said [Lily Paul](#), Deputy Director with the CALSTART Midwest Regional Office, a clean transportation non-profit providing implementation support.

Background

The EPA Clean Ports Program, created under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, allocated \$3 billion to help fund planning and the purchase of zero-emission port equipment at U.S. Ports. This grant supports planning for advanced technologies to modernize port infrastructure to reduce emissions while also improving safety and efficiency in the movement of goods and passengers.

The funds were distributed among 26 states and U.S. territories, including Illinois. In 2024, the Illinois EPA — the prime recipient — received two grants for Planning and Deployment totaling over \$95 million to help decarbonize its ports.

The Illinois Clean Ports Program will use the Planning funds to serve seven small water port districts in three rural locations including port districts within the Illinois Waterway Ports Commission, the Mid-America Intermodal Authority Port District, and the Upper Mississippi River International Port District; together, they span 23 counties and 470 river miles along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

For more information about the Illinois Clean Ports Program, visit www.illinoiscleanports.org or email the project team at EPA.cleanports@Illinois.gov.

About Illinois EPA

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) was created in 1970 as part of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act, making it the longest standing environmental protection agency in the U.S. The mission of the Illinois EPA is to safeguard environmental quality, consistent with the social and economic needs of the State of Illinois, so as to protect health, welfare, property, and the quality of life.

About CALSTART

CALSTART brings the clean transportation industry together to accelerate innovation and grow the market. Bridging government and industry with support from our members and partners, we scale affordable clean transportation options that cut air pollution and curb climate change.

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