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### ***Investing in Green Jobs Now for Future Growth***

A green economy is not science fiction. It's already begun in Illinois. New businesses, friendly to the environment, are sprouting up. And they're bearing new jobs.

At the start of my term as State Senator, I was chief sponsor of a measure to let schools and community colleges own and operate wind farms. That directly reduces energy costs for taxpayers – as well as our carbon footprint. The next year we expanded that legislation to include counties and municipalities. Our footprint is getting smaller yet.

In 2008 I was able to secure funding from the State of Illinois to help Siemens-Winergy open a new facility and create hundreds of new, green jobs in Elgin. The company manufactures mechanical drives for wind turbines.

Millions of dollars are being spent to rebuild Illinois through green initiatives that reduce our carbon footprint and our dependence on foreign oil.

In 2010 and beyond, the General Assembly's recently passed capital bill will create more than 400,000 new jobs – restoring our state's infrastructure, roads and bridges, and helping build new energy-efficient schools and hospitals, among other projects.

Green technology, however, must be matched with a workforce trained to develop and use it. So, this past session I sponsored the 21st Century Workforce Development fund to help workers retool with the skills they'll need to assist renewable energy industries.

President Obama has outlined the country's goals to create green jobs by investing in energy efficient projects, solar and wind energy, clean energy and weatherization projects. These initiatives benefit Illinois while we continue to invest in "green collar jobs," grow the state's green businesses and reduce energy costs for taxpayers. With any luck, in the years ahead our carbon footprint will be smaller with every step.

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