It went pretty much unheralded by the national media, but in December Illinois adopted a major new energy lawl — and with strong bipartisan support. Each side had some things to celebrate.

The Republican Governor touted the impact of the bill on utility bills. According to the Governor, the "contains a guaranteed cap that energy prices cannot increase more than 25 cents on the average residential home, and cannot increase more than 1.3 percent on commercial and industrial users over the next ten years. Rates are projected to decrease for the first several years due to the utilities being able to amortize energy efficiency." The Governor also expressed satisfaction that the bill would allow two nuclear plants to stay open by crediting them for their zero carbon emissions.

Environmentalists also saw much to celebrate. According to the Sierra Club, the new law will "open the door for more clean energy development across the state, create tens of thousands of jobs, and provide Illinois with a strong path forward in moving beyond dirty and expensive fossil fuels." The Environmental Defense Fund went into more detail about the law. The law will require the state's largest utilities to "significantly reduce their energy use by 2030." It also improves Illinois's Renewable Portfolio Standard, " directly leading to the development of – at a minimum – 3,000 MW of solar and 1,300 MW of wind power, or enough to power almost 1 million homes.. It also create a community solar system, allowing "those who can't or don't want to install solar panels on their roof – like home renters or apartment dwellers – to 'subscribe' to a solar project at a local church." school, or business. Finally, the bill allocates "$25 million per year to help low-income homes become more energy-efficient, saving money and energy" and creates "a comprehensive low-income solar deployment and job training program."

Bipartisanship seems to be an endangered species in Washington, D.C. But what happened in Illinois may give us hope that things could change in Washington.