Last week, Illinois's governor signed into law a major piece of climate legislation. The law deserves more attention than it has received. Sadly, however, Illinois seems to be something of a neglected stepchild in the media. That's a pity, because there are some important lessons in Illinois's experience, both for the Midwest and the country as a whole.

Maybe because it's in "flyover country," the state of Illinois suffers in terms of media attention. A surprising number of people can't even pronounce the state's name correctly. (The "s" at the end is silent.) Yet with a GDP two-thirds the size of Spain's, it has the fifth biggest state economy and the sixth largest state population. Less appealingly, it's also #4 in coal production, #7 in greenhouse gas emissions, and #4 in oil refinery capacity. Illinois, in short, is an important part of the U.S. energy picture.

The new law has several notable features. First, it sets an ambitious target, requiring that the grid be 40% renewable by 2030 and carbon-free by 2045. Second, it provides some important subsidies. To begin with, there's $700 million to support the state's ailing nuclear plants. That's crucial to the state's decarbonization effort, given that over half of Illinois's power generation is nuclear. There's also $340 million for renewables, and $180 million to soften the economic impact on communities of closing fossil fuel plants. Third, the law plays serious attention to the needs of environmental justice communities, with $115 million for economic development and $78 million for electric vehicles and charging infrastructures in those communities.

It's worth pointing out that this wasn't the first major climate effort in Illinois. In December of 2016, just before Trump took office, Illinois passed another major climate law. That law was applauded by environmental groups such as the **Environmental Defense Fund** . The 2016 law required substantial reductions in energy use by 2030, tightened the state's renewable portfolio standard, and authorized communities to procure solar energy for their residents. The 2016 law also set aside $25 million per year for energy efficiency programs aimed at low-income homes. As I observed at the time, that bill was also striking politically: it was a bipartisan effort, signed by a Republican governor.

Like the 2016 law, the current one had broad political support, with bipartisan supermajorities in both houses of the state legislature. There may be lessons there for other states. I'm sure that including support for communities impacted by plant closures helped sweeten the deal, as did the support for nuclear (which remains

popular with Republicans). The environmental justice provisions may have helped bringing leaders of Illinois's minority communities on board. Illinois's success might be something for other climate advocates elsewhere to consider.