NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois EPA's Office of Energy Awards Grant to Southern Illinois University-Carbondale for Innovative Engineering Project

Project Will Deliver Solar, Energy Storage and Communication Resilience

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director John J. Kim has announced that the Agency's Office of Energy has issued a $900,000 grant award to SIU Carbondale for a unique solar photovoltaic plus energy storage and communication resiliency project. The SIU Solar + Storage project will feature more than 150kW of solar generation and 310kWh of storage capacity in a highly-visible section of campus at the SIU College of Engineering.

As proposed, this project will: reduce SIU's demand on the grid; serve as an important educational tool to the College of Engineering; and add resilience to the electricity and communications infrastructure of SIU and the surrounding Carbondale community. The SIU Solar + Storage project is the first investment of its kind by Illinois EPA's Office of Energy and designed to be replicated and applied to other contexts and potential future investments across Illinois in and out of the higher education setting.

"The SIU Solar + Storage project will provide energy savings and emergency communications resiliency for the campus and Carbondale community as well as enhance educational opportunities for the University's College of Engineering," said Director Kim. "Illinois EPA looks forward to watching the project evolve as students engage with the technology from different perspectives."

There are two other important components of the project. First, solar powered long-term evolution (LTE) communication modules will sustain cellular communication for the SIU police department, the Carbondale police department, and the Carbondale fire department in the event of power disruption. Second, the project intends to demonstrate that photovoltaic (PV) systems with energy storage provide a viable alternative when selecting backup power sources for small-scale applications. This will be achieved by closely monitoring the operation of the battery storage backup in response to utility power disruption.

The Office of Energy is working closely with the SIU Office of Sponsored Programs, the SIU Physical Plant Engineering Services, and the College of Engineering to design an impactful project with meaningful educational opportunities for engineering and communications students.

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