



SUPPORT AN ILLINOIS COAL SEVERANCE TAX HOLD A HOUSE PARTY!

HOUSE PARTIES

To successfully change the narrative on coal and lay the groundwork for enacting a coal severance tax (CST), we will need to build an informed and engaged public. Sharing information with your friends and neighbors through small gatherings in your home is a great way to spread the word and invigorate the movement. Reinvest Illinois is ready to help you do just that, and will provide the resources necessary to host a successful event.

How to Host a House Party

First, contact Pam Richart (773.556.3418 or prichart@ecojusticecollaborative.org) to request a House Party Guide and support materials. These will include:

- A copy of or access to a DVD of the slide show, Reinvesting in the Heartland.
- Planning checklist.
- Sample invitation.
- Sign-in sheets.
- Introductory notes that help you frame the evening's event and benefits of an IL CST.
- Fact sheets.
- Frequently asked questions.
- Tools for engagement action list.

Team with a friend to help share the planning. Divide up duties to make it easier.

Decide Who to Invite

Prepare a list of people who you think might be interested in making coal pay its fair share. These could be friends, family, co-workers, or other acquaintances in your community.

Remember, our objective is to build a movement of people who will be willing to be a voice for the campaign. Are you involved in a local group that works on related issues? Are you a member of a religious institution, or community organization who might find the topic of interest? Include community and business leaders on your list, if possible.

Set a Date

Set a date and location for the event at least three to four weeks in advance. Try to avoid regularly-scheduled meetings of other groups in your community, or special events.

Make sure that you have one of the following available:

- Television with DVD play-back capability.
- Television with computer mirroring capability.
- Computer with DVD drive/ digital projector/ speakers with plenty of volume.

Decide where you will show the video and host the discussion. If you are using a projector, make sure that you have a blank wall or screen that will be clearly visible.

Give the set-up a test well before the meeting date to make certain that everything works and will function as you've envisioned.

Send Out Invitations

At least three weeks before the party, send out your invitations. This can be done via email or regular mail. In three to four days, follow-up with a phone call. Include contact information with request for RSVP with your invitation.

One week prior to the event, make personal calls to confirm your headcount. On the day of the event, send out a welcoming email reminding everyone of the time.

Arrange for Light Refreshments

Depending on the time of the gathering, light refreshments are recommended. Coffee, tea, fruit or easy dessert may be appropriate. There is no need to go overboard, but food and drink help make for a more relaxed gathering and encourage socializing. Determine who will provide the refreshments, what they will be, and in what quantity.

Day of the Event

Make sure that the TV or projection equipment is set-up and functioning well before guests arrive.

Have copies of handouts ready and on a nearby table, available as people come in. Greet each attendee and ask each person to sign-in with their full name, address, phone and email address. This is very important for follow-up contacts.

It's Event Time!

Begin the evening with a brief introduction of the subject and why you have invited your guests to attend. Introductory notes will be provided for your use.

You may serve refreshments at any time during the evening. Build in time for people to introduce themselves and/or engage in arrival conversation. However, set a firm starting and ending time and adhere to it, so that people's time is respected.

After the video, open the evening up for discussion and comments. We want everyone to have a chance to express their response to the proposal and also articulate their concerns. You do not have to have all of the answers (although the fact sheets we'll provide should be of help). In soliciting responses, you may ask your guest what they may have learned. What was surprising? With what did they agree or disagree? The host or facilitator is encouraged to write down responses and questions for follow-up by the campaign team.

Give people time to express their thoughts after the video, but make sure that you present the Tools for Engagement / Action List while people are still engaged and not ready to leave. Encourage people speak their intention to take on at least one item on the list and record commitments. Assure attendees that the campaign team will be in touch to provide support for commitments.

If post video conversation continues beyond the designated ending time, be sure to give anyone who wishes to leave, permission to do so.

Following the Event

Send a brief email to each attendee thanking them for participating and leaving open a request to offer their comments.

Send a copy of the sign-in sheet and your notes from the evening to:

Pam Richart, Eco-Justice Collaborative
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Champaign, IL 61821
prichart@ecojusticecollaborative.org

Questions?

Call Pam or Lan Richart at 773.556.3417 or 3418. We're here to provide support, and are eager to help you in any way that we can!