

33% Renewables Portfolio Standard Renewable Energy for California's Future

California Climate Choices

California Needs to Increase its Use of Clean, Renewable Sources of Electricity

One essential tool to enable this to happen is increasing the state's Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) to at least 33 percent by 2020.

The current RES statute, often referred to as the **Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS)**, requires regulated electric utilities to increase their use of wind, solar and other eligible renewable electricity sources by at least one percent per year, reaching at least 20 percent by 2010.

While municipal utilities are required to adopt their own RPS, they are not yet bound by the same statutory requirements and oversight as the investor-owned utilities.

A 33 Percent Renewable Electricity Standard Will Provide Significant Benefits to Californians

- Displace nearly 13 million metric tons of global warming emissions in 2020—equivalent to removing almost three million cars from the road, or enough to avoid 10 to 15 new large fossil fuel power plants¹.
- Stimulate clean technology investment and innovation and grow the 'green collar jobs' economy by sending a clear market signal that new renewables will be developed in our state.
- Provide market certainty for developers, investors and planners of renewables projects and transmission.
- Diversify the state's energy supply and help protect consumers from natural gas price volatility.

¹ According to the California Public Utilities Commission, increasing the RPS from 20 to 33 percent will result in 12.8 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions reductions in 2020. See: California Public Utilities Commission Final Opinion on Greenhouse Gas Regulatory Strategies, October 16, 2008, p.39

- Help meet our global warming pollution cap under AB 32.
- Promote long-term infrastructure planning to enable expansion of renewable energy.
- Improve air quality in impacted communities by reducing future fossil fuel generation.



Clearing the Air

Roughly 22 percent of our state's global warming emissions result from electricity used in California. Increasing the amount of electricity from renewable sources will help address global warming by reducing these heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, a strong renewable energy standard will improve the air we breathe by shifting away from an over-reliance on fossil fuels toward cleaner sources that emit less air pollution.

California: A Leader in Renewables

A clear and enforceable 33 percent RPS for all utilities, with appropriate reforms to the existing statute, would help expand California's renewable energy market and its clean tech industry.

A fully referenced version of this fact sheet is available online at www.ucsusa.org

The Union of Concerned Scientists is the leading science-based nonprofit working for a healthy environment and a safer world.

The incremental progress from a 20 percent to a 33 percent requirement for renewable energy will result in 13,000 new megawatts of renewable power—enough to meet the electricity needs of 6 million typical homes. Achieving the full 33 percent requirement would likely provide enough renewable energy in the state to power almost every residential home with green energy by 2020.

Air Resources Board to develop Renewable Energy Standard; Additional action needed in the State Legislature

In the fall of 2009, the legislature passed two bills-SB 14 and AB 64-that would have increased the state's portfolio of renewable energy to 33 percent by 2020. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the bills and instead signed Executive Order S-21-09, which instructs the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to develop a rule to achieve the same goal.

UCS is actively involved in the ARB proceeding to ensure the 33 percent renewables mandate builds upon and strengthens the state's existing renewables program. At the same time, UCS is pushing for the legislature to pass another bill, to solidify the state's commitment to achieving 33 percent renewables by 2020.

In addition to reducing global warming pollution from fossil-fueled power plants and promoting air quality benefits in California, any bill to increase California's renewable electricity standard should adhere to the following principles:

- It must set a clear, enforceable statutory requirement, with interim obligations, that all utilities obtain at least 33 percent of the electricity for their customers from eligible renewable sources by 2020.
- It must provide economic certainty and realistically generous pricing policies for the renewables industry and encourage all load-serving entities to sign long-term contracts for viable projects.
- It must promote the development of renewable energy facilities that can create quality green collar jobs.
- It must include meaningful enforcement and appropriate flexibility; however, it must not include off-ramps to nowhere.
- It must simplify the RPS program and provide for regulatory stability.

A 33% statutory RPS is supported by dozens of organizations including (partial list):

- American Lung Association of California
- Association of Irrigated Residents
- Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates
- Breathe California
- California Environmental Justice Alliance
- California Interfaith Power & Light
- California League of Conservation Voters
- California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
- California Solar Energy Industries Association
- California Wind Energy Association
- Californians Against Waste
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Center for Resource Solutions
- Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
- Clean Power Campaign
- Cleantech America, Inc.
- Clean Air Now
- Clean Water and Air Matter
- Coalition for Clean Air
- Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life of Southern California
- Community Environmental Council
- Communities for a Better Environment
- Earth Day Los Angeles
- Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
- Energy Independence Now
- Environment California
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2)
- Faith2Green
- Fresno Metro Ministry
- Friends of the Earth
- Global Green USA
- Green for All
- Green Power Institute
- Large-scale Solar Association
- Latino Environmental Advancement & Policy Institute
- Marin Carbon Project
- Medical Advocates for Healthy Air
- National Parks and Conservation Association
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Pacoima Beautiful
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Planning and Conservation League
- Sierra Club California
- The Solar Alliance
- Union of Concerned Scientists
- Vote Solar

