

Audubon • Blue Green Alliance • Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture) • Environment America • Fresh Energy • League of Conservation Voters • National Wildlife Federation • Oceana • Sierra Club • Southern Alliance for Clean Energy • Union of Concerned Scientists • United Steelworkers • Vote Solar • Western Organization of Resource Councils • The Wilderness Society

May 21, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
SD-304
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bingaman:

We wish to thank you for your commitment to including a Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) in the energy legislation that is before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. However, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the RES proposal presently being considered by the Committee. As written, we believe that the current proposal will fail to drive a significant expansion of the market for renewable energy in the U.S. and would therefore miss the opportunity to create hundreds of thousands of clean energy jobs.

An RES is an essential piece of an overall successful clean energy strategy, and if designed properly, will create new jobs, stimulate the economy, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the most cost-effective manner. However, an RES that does little to advance the generation of renewable energy beyond business as usual and includes energy sources that are neither clean nor renewable would fail to take full advantage of the opportunity to help our country meet the interrelated challenges of climate change, economic competitiveness, and energy independence.

Unfortunately, the amount of renewable energy development resulting from the proposed RES requirement could be lower than projections by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) for growth already expected in development as a result of the state RES standards and the financial incentives enacted by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The EIA projects that current state and Federal policies will result in approximately 10.2 percent renewable generation by 2021. Because of utility exemptions, baseline deductions and opt-out provisions, renewable energy generation required under the current proposal may be as low as 8.1 percent by 2021, according to an analysis by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

We urge you to support an amendment to be offered by Senator Udall to strengthen the RES requirement to 25 percent by 2025. Such a standard would create 297,000 new jobs and save consumers \$64.3 billion in lower electricity and natural gas bills by 2025 according to UCS. Furthermore, multiple studies have also shown that every region in the country has sufficient resources to meet such a standard. A recent analysis by the World Resources Institute found that the Southeast in particular has sufficient renewable energy resources to meet 30 percent of the region's electricity needs within the next 15 years.

We strongly urge you and the members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to pass a strong RES and to oppose any amendments to further weaken the current proposal.

Sincerely,
Audubon
Blue Green Alliance
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture)
Environment America
Fresh Energy
League of Conservation Voters
National Wildlife Federation
Oceana
Sierra Club
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Steelworkers
Vote Solar
Western Organization of Resource Councils
The Wilderness Society

CC Members of the Energy & Natural Resources Committee