

July 28, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman
Energy & Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Energy & Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Bingaman and Ranking Member Murkowski,

As the Senate considers new energy legislation, the undersigned organizations write to urge your support for the inclusion of a vigorous renewable energy standard in any final Senate energy bill. Inclusion of these provisions will help America's drive toward energy independence, re-invigorate rural communities through job growth and income generation for agriculture, and significantly improve the environment and the air we breathe.

We appreciate the Senate's work to date in crafting a Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) as currently proposed in the American Clean Energy Leadership Act (ACELA) passed by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The committee-passed RES provides a foundation upon which to further increase renewable energy production. We note that between the committee members who voted for ACELA and the 27 Senators who recently circulated a letter calling for a strong RES, over one third of all Senators have expressed solid bipartisan support for this measure.

We strongly concur in the need for the RES. Many states have successfully adopted RES policies that have already demonstrated the feasibility of this approach. Indeed, many of the 30 states with an RES policy have mandates at or above the Senate Energy Committee's 15% level. This is why energy policy being discussed today should take the next step forward and create a national market opportunity to grow the renewable energy industry by boosting the national RES to ensure that 25% of our nation's energy mix comes from renewable resources by the year 2025.

A 25% RES constructed properly has a tremendous ability to accomplish multiple goals for our country. Economic modeling of a more conservative 20% RES by 2020 shows a projection of over \$70 billion in new capital investment; approximately \$15 billion in income to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities; and \$5 billion in new local tax revenues¹. Over 30,000 new rural jobs and over 150,000 jobs nationally would result from a 20% RES by 2020². A 25% RES by 2025 would likely increase these significant impacts.

¹ American Council On Renewable Energy, "The Outlook on Renewable Energy in America", JANUARY 2007, page 57 found at www.acore.org

² Id.

These economic benefits to America's farms and ranches are in addition to the energy security benefits our nation will receive from expanding the diversification of our energy supply as well as lowering our nation's greenhouse gas emissions. As noted, the job creation and rural development effects of such a policy are also considerable. American agriculture stands ready to help meet the country's clean energy needs.

Sincerely,

National Farmers Union
National Association of Wheat Growers
American Farmland Trust
International Biochar Initiative

CC:

United States Senators Bayh, Bennet, Scott Brown, Sherrod Brown, Brownback, Cantwell, Carper, Casey, Collins, Conrad, Corker, Dodd, Dorgan, Feingold, Feinstein, Franken, Gillibrand, Gregg, Harkin, Johnson, Kaufman, Kerry, Klobuchar, Kohl, Lautenberg, Leahy, Lincoln, Lugar, Merkley, Murray, Nelson, Sanders, Sessions, Shaheen, Snowe, Specter, Stabenow, Tester, Mark Udall, Tom Udall, and Wyden