



A STRONG RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY STANDARD MAKES AMERICA STRONGER

A Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) is one of the most effective energy policy strategies to help the United States achieve greater prosperity, become more energy independent and reach its environmental objectives. It is essential that Congress adopt a strong RES of at least 25 percent by 2025 to accelerate development of a clean energy economy in the United States.

A strong RES will help create jobs and position the United States to compete in the rapidly growing international marketplace for solar, wind and other advanced renewable energy technologies. In the process, an RES will help make America more energy independent by diversifying its energy supply and supporting development of clean, domestically available natural resources. An RES is a market-based mechanism that would help put the United States on a path to use more sustainable forms of energy

Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have adopted RES policies, as have more than 35 nations. A national policy would give businesses and entrepreneurs the predictability they need to mobilize new investments in the U.S. clean energy sector and to realize the economic, energy and environmental benefits.

For Jobs and the Economy

According to a report commissioned by the RES Alliance for Jobs, a national RES of 25 percent by 2025 would generate an additional 274,000 jobs in the energy sector. That same report found that many states would actually lose clean energy jobs without a strong national RES.¹

While Congress has provided significant financial investment through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to help accelerate the clean energy economy, greater, more sustained investment must come from the private sector. A federal RES would significantly help increase the market demand for renewable power, giving investors the certainty they need to invest in new plants and projects.

The clean energy economy is taking hold around the world—growing by more than 230 percent in the last five years according to a recent report by The Pew Charitable

Trusts based on data compiled by Bloomberg New Energy Finance, a leading provider of data and analysis on clean energy and carbon market finance and investment.² The report also showed that other nations are investing more quickly and extensively in clean energy than the U.S. in order to create jobs and seize market share. However, the United States has the world's most effective assets for innovation—federal, academic and private sector research, as well as a culture of innovation. A strong RES will give the marketplace a clear signal for innovation that will ensure long-term competitiveness and drive job creation for the United States.

For National Security

A strong RES will also help enhance U.S. security by increasing our energy independence. Greater utilization of renewable energy sources, combined with policies that encourage the development of electric vehicles, will reduce our need to import foreign oil which supplies

two-thirds of oil consumed by the transportation sector. Additionally, by encouraging the development of diverse, domestically available power generation technologies, an RES will reduce U.S. consumption of imported gas and home heating oil.

By diversifying the U.S. energy generation mix, we can also help reduce energy price spikes and the possibility of crippling terrorist attacks. Distributed generation of renewable energy is much less vulnerable to sabotage than large, centralized power plants.

A strong RES will also make us more secure by enhancing our global competitiveness in the clean energy economy. According to venture capital expert John Doerr, the United States is home to only four of the top 30 companies involved in solar, wind and advanced battery development.³

For a Cleaner, Healthier Environment

A strong RES will also help the United States achieve its environmental objectives. One of the primary benefits of an RES is that it will displace some fossil energy sources, which pollute more in the production and generation process than renewable energy sources.

According to a report by the Union of Concerned Scientists, a strong RES could reduce U.S. global

warming pollution by more than 400 million metric tons of emissions every year by 2020, the equivalent of taking 70 million cars off the road.⁴

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also reports that accelerated development of renewable energy through adoption of an RES could help to reduce other air and water pollutants. The EPA and other experts note that emissions of nitrogen oxides, acid-rain precursors, mercury and other pollutants that impact human and environmental health could be reduced through adoption of an RES.⁵

A Strong RES Is Needed to Help the U.S. Clean Energy Industry Thrive

Support for a national RES ranges from U.S. based renewable power companies such as Clipper Windpower and Solar City to industry associations like the American Wind Energy Association, the Geothermal Energy Association, and the Solar Energy Industries Association, and the environmental community. An RES is also backed by large and small manufacturers such as General Electric and Kalt Manufacturing Company.

With strong, national energy policies like an RES, this country's renewable energy market can blossom, creating good jobs, reducing our fossil fuel dependence and protecting our national security.

ENDNOTES

¹ http://www.awea.org/newsroom/pdf/2-4-10_RES_Alliance_Study_Backgrounder.pdf.

² *Who's Winning the Clean Energy Race? Growth, Competition, and Opportunity in the World's Largest Economies*. <http://www.pewglobalwarming.org/cleanenergyeconomy/pdf/PewG-20Report.pdf>.

³ Kent Garber, (interview) "John Doerr: U.S. Needs More Energy Research." *US News and World Report*, October 22, 2009. <http://politics.usnews.com/news/best-leaders/articles/2009/10/22/john-doerr-us-needs-more-energy-research.html>.

⁴ Union of Concerned Scientists, *Renewing America's Economy*, 2004. http://www.uicsusa.org/assets/documents/clean_energy/ACFoDbPiL.pdf.

⁵ Environmental Protection Agency, *Renewable Portfolio Standards Factsheet*, April, 2009. http://www.epa.gov/chp/state-policy/renewable_fs.html.