



Governors'
Wind
Energy
Coalition

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Gov. Jim Doyle

September 13, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman, Energy & Natural
Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
361-A Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member, Energy & Natural
Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

As a bipartisan group of governors representing citizens from all areas of the nation, the Governors' Wind Energy Coalition was created to address some of the most pressing needs facing America today — job creation, secure energy supplies and cost-effective carbon emissions reductions. One of the best ways to meet these needs is to harness the economic and environmental benefits of domestic renewable electricity production. We urge passage of a strong Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) to ensure the rapid growth of the nation's wind and other renewable electricity sources.

A strong RES is the cornerstone for the nation's new clean energy economy. The U.S. wind energy industry will never reach its full potential, unless and until Congress passes legislation setting a robust minimum standard for the use of renewable electricity. A strong RES is the most economically-efficient way to advance clean domestic energy and immediately create jobs in renewable energy manufacturing, construction of new projects and associated transmission, and ongoing operation and maintenance of these facilities.

Over one-half of the states have enacted and proven the value of a state-level RES. We believe a federal RES should build on these state examples while allowing states the flexibility to set higher renewable energy goals.

This federal framework would also spread the economic benefits of wind power to states in the South that do not have sufficient wind resources, but which comprise part of the manufacturing supply chain for the domestic wind power industry. A national RES will facilitate low-cost development of high quality renewable energy resources across the nation and would on its own — without new federal policy — spur additional expansion and improvements to the transmission system as well as support supply chain component providers throughout the country.

Europe, China, India and other countries are far ahead of the U.S. in terms of capturing the economic benefits of wind and other renewables — despite the fact that the U.S. has some of the world's richest wind resources — because we lack a strategic long-term policy with a bold yet practical RES requirement as its centerpiece that creates sufficient certainty for renewable energy investors, developers, and manufacturers to deploy such resources here at home.


We wish to work with you and with the Administration to help shape federal energy legislation this year. The economic stakes are high for our states, and we see a narrow window of opportunity for Congress to enact a long overdue reworking of federal laws governing renewable energy.

The nation's past energy policy has left Americans exposed to volatile energy prices and limited clean energy options. We look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to design an intelligent RES framework that builds upon the good work that states have already achieved, while looking to the future to build a clean energy infrastructure that serves the nation's economic and environmental goals. We know that by working together we can successfully address this challenge.

Sincerely,



Chester J. Culver, Chair
and Governor of Iowa



Donald L. Carcieri, Vice Chair
and Governor of Rhode Island

c:

Members, Energy & Natural Resources Committee

The Honorable Carol Browner, Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change

The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior