

August 6, 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

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

With the recent decision to delay the energy debate until September, the Senate has another chance to make a clear choice: it can maintain and create hundreds of thousands of good-paying, manufacturing jobs domestically or allow those jobs to move overseas. Failure to act will also cause us to miss an opportunity to increase revenue for America's farmers and ranchers and local economies. The outcome hinges on whether or not we pass a national Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) this year.

The need for an RES could not be more urgent. We are at a crucial moment in the global clean energy race with manufacturers determining where, over the next three to five years, they will spend billions of dollars building facilities and hiring workers. While America delays, countries like China and the European Union have seen the writing on the wall, enacting their own renewable standards and carbon policy to attract that investment. Last year, China claimed the global lead in wind power installed and solar power manufactured as financing in Chinese wind turbines, solar panels and low-carbon technology jumped 72% to \$11.5 billion – almost triple the U.S. investment over the same period. Given this tipping point, the time for Congress to act on policies that advance America's clean energy industry and workforce is now.

A national RES is also critical to providing the market certainty our energy sector so desperately needs and pumping millions of dollars into local economies from employment, landowner payments, and tax receipts. Our nation's utilities are also poised to invest billions of dollars building a modern clean electricity system for America. But they need a signal to take that capital off the sidelines. Meanwhile, the effects of the federal government's indecision are already visible. For example, wind power installations have sunk back to 2007 levels with only 700 megawatts installed in the second quarter this year – a 71% decrease from 2009 levels. Passing an RES could reverse this trend.

What's more, passing an RES would ensure that in America, we keep growing the amount of electricity generated from clean renewable energy, which is one of our key climate solutions.

Last year the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee reported out the RES with both Democratic and Republican votes. As Republican Senator Sam Brownback put it on the floor

last week, “There is a strong base of bipartisan support to do this. And I also believe there's a strong majority community across America that supports this.”

Agricultural groups, environmentalists, labor, manufacturers, utilities, and other groups and businesses agree with a majority of Senators that establishing an RES is an important tool for building a strong clean energy industry that keeps America competitive, revives American manufacturing, maintains and creates jobs, and puts money in the pockets of rural landowners. The alternative is almost unimaginable: America ceding *the* industry of the 21st century – started with technologies we invented – to foreign nations. We urge you to take action in September to pass an RES and keep America in the race.

Signed,

AES Corporation
American Wind Energy Association
Biomass Power Association
Blue Green Alliance
Center for American Progress
Energy Recovery Council
Environment America
International Biochar Initiative
League of Conservation Voters
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Farmers Union
National Hydropower Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
NextEra Energy
Pew Environment Group
RES Alliance for Jobs
Sierra Club
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Steelworkers
Xcel Energy