

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
US Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives

March 31, 2009

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

We are Southern renewable energy business owners, farmers, forest owners, academics, conservation advocates, and economic development agents writing in support of a national renewable electricity standard (RES). Increasing renewable electricity generation throughout our country will enhance national energy security by diversifying our sources of electric generation. As the United States continues to increase energy imports, an RES can help make America and the Southeast less dependent on foreign energy sources. Harnessing the Southeast's renewable energy resources will benefit our region by creating jobs and helping to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. We urge you to support a robust RES of 25 percent by 2025 that will help unleash the Southeast's renewable energy potential and position our region as a leader in our country's transition to a clean energy economy.

An RES is a market-based mechanism that requires electric utilities to include a specific percentage of clean, renewable energy in their generation portfolios. In addition to producing renewable energy in their service areas, electric utilities can purchase renewable energy credits (RECs) from other producers. However, the Southeast has abundant renewable energy resources, which will help meet a national standard, that include significant quantities of sustainably-harvested biomass as well as hydropower (increasing output of existing turbines, adding new turbines to existing dams that don't currently have them, and ocean and/or tidal), wind, solar (PV and thermal) and landfill gas.

The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy's analysis of renewable energy potential in the Southeast shows that states in this region have enough bioenergy, solar, wind (onshore and offshore), hydro-electric and geothermal resources to meet a strong RES of 25 percent by 2025. Furthermore, the Southeast has sufficient renewable energy resources to meet high interim targets, such as 20 percent by 2020. Forests and farms, for example, across the region already produce a variety of biomass feedstocks to co-fire, gasify or combust in high efficiency boilers.

In addition to its biomass resources, the South has considerable hydroelectric resources that would be eligible for the RES. First, the South can increase the energy produced at these existing generators (known as "incremental" hydroelectric energy). A second source of hydropower that would qualify for the RES comes from adding generators to existing dams that do not currently have them. These opportunities must be evaluated on a case by case basis, but in the Commonwealth of Kentucky alone, projects are underway to add 264 MW worth of turbine capacity to existing dams that do not currently have them. Developers have received preliminary permit approval from FERC to add another 586 MW, and run-of-the-river hydroelectric facilities also offer tremendous opportunity to capture this renewable resource

Similarly, the Southeast's solar and wind energy resources, which are often overlooked, can contribute to the RES. The region's solar photovoltaic potential rivals some of the best resources in the country, yet the region is far behind in deploying these commercially available technologies. In addition, offshore wind in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic is a significant resource that we have not yet begun to draw upon. Advanced tidal, wave power and geothermal technologies are also being explored as potential renewable resources that can displace fossil fuels as our primary sources of energy. A national RES creates a market for these renewable technologies to grow and revitalize our region's faltering economy.

A national RES will create new jobs and provide new economic opportunity throughout the Southeast. A Renewable Energy Policy Project report found that a national RES has the potential to create more than 32,000 new jobs in the Southeast in wind and solar technologies alone. A 2007 study by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) analyzed the benefits of a 20% by 2020 RES, based on a model developed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Using DOE's assumptions, UCS found that by selling farm and forest residues to power plants, Southern landowners stand to earn \$15.8 billion by 2020. New markets for farm and forest biomass will create additional income for farmers and forest owners, renewing their communities as well.

By developing the Southeast's local resources, the RES will decrease our region's reliance on imported energy sources and keep more of our energy dollars at home. A UCS analysis found that in 2006 the Southeast received 94 percent of its electric energy from fossil fuel and nuclear power, energy sources that by and large had to be imported to the region. In fact, Southeastern states spent \$10.7 billion in 2006 to purchase coal from outside our region, including spending more than \$1 billion to import coal from Venezuela, Colombia, and Poland.

Our desire to be energy independent is nothing new. The Southeast has a rich history of independence, leadership and a strong rural character. In recent decades, our Main Streets and our rural communities have become vacant, but we are not resigned to that fate. We believe that our strong network of research universities, entrepreneurs, dedicated renewable energy professionals, and conservation-oriented communities will come together to rejuvenate these devastated areas. Renewable energy production from a variety of natural renewable resources is one way we can empower our communities, reduce our fossil fuel consumption, mitigate climate change, and join the rest of the United States in making our country an international leader in renewable energy.

Please support a robust national renewable electricity standard. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

The 157 community leaders and businesspeople and 3,051 citizens who support a strong RES for the Southeast and the nation from:

Alabama (114 additional citizen signers)

Phillip C. Badger, General Bioenergy, Inc., President, Florence

Michael Churchman, Alabama Environmental Council, Executive Director, Birmingham

Mike Leonard, MFG/Alabama, LLC, Opp

Jenny Dorgan, Birmingham

Arkansas (75 additional citizen signers)

Ron Bell, Ozark Woodland Owners' Association of Arkansas, Batesville

Joan Cash, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, Arkansas State Representative

Miles Goggans, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, Member, Little Rock

Art Hobson, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, Member, Fayetteville

Robert McAfee, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, Alliance for Economy & Climate Solutions, Climatologist, Hackett

Rob Risher, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, The Ecological Conservation Organization, Member, Little Rock

C.L. Sagars, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, University of Arkansas, Member, Fayetteville

Kevin Smith, Former Arkansas State Senator, Co-Chair, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission, Helena

Kathy Webb, Arkansas State Representative, Chair, Gov. Beebe's Global Warming Commission

Florida (898 additional citizen signers)

Teresa Dalziel, Guardian Solar Renewable Energy Resources, Clearwater
Wayne Hildreth, Wind Energy Consulting and Contracting, President, Jacksonville
Damien Hoffman, Endgame 360, Inc., CEO, Tampa
Matthew Langholtz, BioResources Management, Inc., Gainesville
Glenn Mauney, Wind Energy Consulting and Contracting, Director of Business Development, Jacksonville
Bonnie Nickel, Sarasota Network for Climate Action, Co-founder, Venice
Eugene Eccli, Pompano Beach
Guido and Teri Reuter, Orlando

Georgia (311 additional citizen signers)

Rick Allen, Maximus Energy, LLC, Stone Mountain
Torry Bates, Maximus Energy, LLC, Stone Mountain
Brandon Bell, IWG, Atlanta
Biomass Gas & Electric, Norcross
Tricia Bonner, The Solar College Initiative, Atlanta
Walter Brown, GSP, LLC, Atlanta
Ben Browning, Georgia Solar Power Company, Marietta
Scot Burton, Georgia Solar Energy Association, Atlanta
Chris Calhoun, Atlanta
Mike Card, Southern Sun Power, Ellijay
Tommy Carroll, Southeastern Wood Producers Association, Executive Director, Forsyth
Ronald Cloud, Macon Automation Co., Macon
Charles Cone, Soenso Energy, VP Marketing, Marietta
Evan Crawford, Innovative Wealth Group, LLC, Marietta
Michelle N. Conlon, One World Sustainable Energy, Inc., Colbert
Roger Cone, Soenso Energy, Marietta
Peter Corbett, New Solergy, Marietta
Fred Fox, Fox Independent Energy, Sugar Hill
David George, Intown Electric Inc., Decatur
William Hughes, CAB, Inc., Sales Account Manager, Buford
April Ingle, Georgia River Network, Executive Director, Athens
David Kyler, Center for a Sustainable Coast, Saint Simons Island
Robert Manning, Georgia Solar Energy Association, Atlanta
George Scot McCoy, Jr., McKeesma Farms, Partner, Sandersville
Jason Megahee, Green Energy Transitions, Decatur
Mims Mobley, Velux, Dacula
John Noel, Energy & Environment, LLC, Atlanta
Kathy Pearson, Academy of Richmond County High School, Science Instructor, Augusta
Adrian Peters, Georgia Solar Energy Association, Suwanee
Mohammed Shif, Alpharetta
Michael Sloan, Keystone Solutions, Cumming
Joe Thomas, Elemental Green, Owner, Atlanta
Clint Thompson, Thompson, Hoffman and Company, Suwanee
Mark Vaughn, Ridge Environmental, LLC, Owner, Augusta
Brad Welborn, Intown Electric, Inc., Atlanta
Terry Wright, Maximus Energy, LLC, Stone Mountain
Carol Bartlett, Clarkston
Lance Beaton, Alpharetta
Doug Beebe, Decatur
Andy Cohen, Atlanta
Tanya Coventry, Decatur
Denis Delahanty, Marietta
Mark Fishman, Atlanta
Rob Greene, Atlanta
Fredrick Luster, Atlanta

Daniel Monoj, Marietta
Jim Powell, Hiawassee
Myron Warden, Atlanta

Kentucky (105 additional citizen signers)

Casey Starr, Appalachia – Science in the Public Interest, Executive Director, Mt. Vernon
Gregory Thompson, Wind Energy Corporation, President and COO, Elizabethtown

Louisiana (86 additional citizen signers)

Rod Courtney, Siemens Generation Services, HS&E Engineer, Denham Springs
Trotter Hunt, Hunt, Guillot, & Associates, LLC, Ruston
National Center for Appropriate Technology, Hammond
Stephen Shelton, Louisiana Clean Tech Network, Executive Director

Missouri (42 additional citizen signers)

Andy Whittington, Mississippi Biomass and Renewable Energy Council, President, Jackson
Theodore K. Jursek, Kansas City

North Carolina (473 additional citizen signers)

Advanced Power Systems, LLC, Winston-Salem
Frank Bell, Bell Associates International, LLC, President, Raleigh
June Blotnick, Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, Charlotte
Eninthal, LLC, Winston-Salem
Wes Evans, Matrix Technology Alliance, Inc., Executive Vice President, Durham
Go2Green USA, Inc., Winston-Salem
Rick Hamilton, Retired Extension Forestry Specialist, Raleigh
Richard Harkrader, Carolina Solar Energy, LLC, Durham
Maria Kingery, Southern Energy Management, Co-Founder, Morrisville
Erik Lensch, Argand Energy Solutions, LLC, Charlotte
Julie W. Mayfield, Western North Carolina Alliance, Executive Director, Asheville
Olee Joel Olsen, Sencera International Inc., Director Business Development, Charlotte
Allen L. Plaster, Comprehensive Forestry Services, Inc., Consulting Forester, New Bern
Michael Shore, FLS Energy, President, Black Mountain
Robert Smith, Sun Power Systems, Managing Member, Winston-Salem
Sundance Power Systems, Weaverville
Kelly May Suttles, Earth Share of North Carolina, Durham
Tom Van Zeeland, Eras Group, Cary
Stephen A. Whitfield, NC Woodlands, Executive Director, Raleigh
Michael Heaney PE, Raleigh
Kelly Sexton, Raleigh

Oklahoma

Delores Jackson, Oklahoma City Community College, Director, Corporate Learning, Oklahoma City

Pennsylvania

Rupert Fraser, Fibrowatt LLC, CEO, Langhorne

South Carolina (112 additional citizen signers)

James D. Alexander, Palmetto Bio-Energy, LLC, President, Charleston
Dana Beach, Coastal Conservation League, Executive Director, Charleston
Joseph J. James, The Corporation for Economic Opportunity, President & CEO, Columbia
Mark Schlievert, Berkely County Water Sanitation Authority, Moncks Corner
Ann Shahid, Audobon South Carolina, Columbia
John Tynan, Upstate Forever, Co-Director, Clean Air and Water Program, Greenville
Bruce W. Wood, Sunstore Solar, Greer
Daniel C. Abel, Conway

Frank M. Powell, Seneca

Tennessee (292 additional citizen signers)

Jeff Barrie, Kilowatt Ours, Nashville

Rodney Boyd, McMinnville Electric System, GM/CEO, Knoxville

Ken Elder, Soltility, Inc., Friendsville

Ben Fischer, Signal Wind Energy, LLC, President, EMJ Corporation, Chattanooga

Louise Gorenflo, Solar Valley Coalition, Crossville

Doug Hunt, Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light, Tennessee State Director, Knoxville

Philip James, Broadway Electric Service Corporation, Estimator, Knoxville

Stephen C. Mauten, Bioten Power and Energy Group, Inc., Principal, Dresden

Shannon Miller, Mossy Creek Network, Jefferson County

Pete Nelson, BioDimensions, Memphis

Crystal Sharp, America 4 Solar, Knoxville

R. Aaron Jordan, Kingsport

Texas

Daniel J. Dructor, American Loggers Association, Executive Vice President, Kempfill

Stephel L. Ehl, TSTC Sweetwater, Instructor Wind Energy Technology, Blackwell

Wade Green, Gamesa Energy USA, Project Developer, Austin

Rick Greiner, Babcock & Brown, Houston

Monty Humble, Mesa Power Group, LLC, VP and General Counsel, Dallas

David J. Morgan, Precision Wind, Director Key Accounts, Trinidad

Michael Sidiropoulos, Renewable Energy Systems Americas Inc., Senior Transmission Planning Engineer

Mike Wick, CMW Builders, LLC, President & CEO, Beaumont

Michael D. Zuteck, Clear Lake Shores

Terry Etling, Dallas

Denise Hill, Fargo

Virginia (372 additional citizen signers)

Diana Abbott, Public Policy Virginia, Charlottesville

Philip Anderson, Sustainable Living Design, Crozet

Keith Argow, National Woodland Owners Association, President, Vienna

Robert Arner, Recovery Enterprises, President, Edinburg

Glen Besa, Sierra Club – VA, Chapter Director, Richmond

Don Erback Ph.D., American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers, President (07-08), Alexandria

T. Hans Jansen, Coaching Energy Efficiency Development, Springfield

Michael J. Keeler, Ecological Leasing Services, Charlottesville

Kurt Klunder, Klunder Consulting, owner, Dumfries

Kimberly Lewis, Public Policy Virginia, Charlottesville

Christine Llewellyn, Williamsburg Climate Action Network, Director, Williamsburg

Nathan Lott, Virginia Conservation Network, Executive Director, Richmond

Remy Luerssen, Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium, James Madison University, Mapping and Education Specialist, Harrisonburg

Pat Okerlund, Chesapeake for Change, Chesapeake

Scott Sklar, The Stella Group, Ltd., President

Luke Staengl, Pesco Beam, CEO, Roanoke

Al Weed, Public Policy Virginia, Chairman, Charlottesville

Kris Anderson, Burke

Mark E. Hanson, Fincastle

Stephen Keach, Charlottesville

Stephen Merrill Smith, Reston

John Shilling, Purcellville

Kim Swanson, Charlottesville

Kirk Winters, Arlington