

PSE&G Favors Passage Of Cap and Trade Bill

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th, Union) regarding the H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009.

I am writing to ask you to support H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (ACESA) when the legislation comes before the U.S. House of Representatives for a vote.

While not every provision in this bill is perfect, we believe it is critically important to put in place an aggressive, economy-wide national cap-and-trade program to control carbon emissions as soon as possible, for three reasons:

New Jersey is already subject to limits on greenhouse gas emissions from power plants under the 10-state Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. This program has been an important catalyst for federal action, but absent a national program that requires others to do their share, New Jersey residents will pay higher electric bills without achieving the level of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions needed to avoid the most damaging effects of climate change. Similarly, New Jersey already has a state renewable portfolio standard that is more aggressive than the federal program contained in the bill.

While there is broad support for reducing our dependence on foreign oil, increasing energy efficiency and encouraging greater production of electricity from renewable sources, this investment simply will not occur on a sustained basis absent a price signal for carbon.

Our state, region and country stand to substantially benefit from the job creation that will result from a clean energy future. In fact, the Pew Charitable Trusts has calculated that by 2007, 2031 businesses had generated more than 25,300 New Jersey jobs related to clean energy. Conversely, failing to curb greenhouse gas emissions will severely impact our coastline, and our farming and tourism industries in a much shorter timeframe than many realize.

PSE&G is particularly supportive of the method of distributing allowances contained in this bill. Unlike the Acid Rain program, which distributed free allowances exclusively to electric generators, the ACESA legislation distributes the vast majority of electric sector allowances to consumers through the local distribution companies. Because the rates charged by PSE&G are set by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, the value of the allowances provided by the federal program will be returned to customers in the form of rate relief and other direct benefits.

Another important section of the bill deals with the issue of transmission. We urge you to vote against any amendments on the House floor that would alter the planning and cost allocation approaches to transmission for renewable electricity.

Last week I testified before the House Energy and Environment Committee that transmission planning would occur at the regional level as it does today rather than at a national level by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and that the costs of building new transmission should be borne by the generator wishing to transmit the power, unless the line is required to maintain the reliability of the grid. The existing language in the ACESA bill supports this view.

Any amendments enabling the socialization of transmission costs across an entire interconnection would provide a tremendous subsidy to power producers in the Midwest - renewable and fossil generation alike - at the expense of local alternatives. We also believe New Jersey customers would be forced to incur significant costs for transmission that may not be needed in the first place. These views largely mirror a letter sent last month by 10 governors from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states including Governor Corzine.

Once a renewable energy standard and carbon price is established, development of renewables will occur, and transmission will be built to accommodate these projects. We must be extremely careful not to overhaul the planning and cost allocation of new transmission in a way and would add substantial and unnecessary costs.

In closing, New Jersey and the Northeast are well ahead of the curve on many of the key elements of this legislation before the House, and as a result, the price New Jersey customers pay for their electricity is well above the national average. At the same time, many regions of the country that pay lower power prices have done far less to address air pollution from the fossil power stations to address their generation fuel mix. Therefore, our strong view is that it's in the best interest of New Jersey customers for Congress to enact a national program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the use of renewable electricity.

Chairman Ralph Izzo
PSE&G, Newark

County 4-H Competes In Speaking Event

ELIZABETH - Four youths from the Union County 4-H Club joined 150 other young people from around the state at New Jersey Presentation Day in New Brunswick to sharpen their public speaking skills. The annual event is sponsored by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H youth development program.

Public speaking is an important part of the 4-H experience. The presentation events provide 4-H club members with an advanced opportunity to practice their skills. Teens who participate in the state event are encouraged to share their knowledge with younger 4-H members in their home counties. Each teen presents an original speech, from eight to 12 minutes long, on a subject of their choice.

The Union County 4-H presenters were Danielle Hill of Plainfield, Bryan Chen of Westfield, Cynthia Lam of Westfield, and Paul Szetela of Linden. To qualify for the state event, each presenter received an "excellent" rating from a panel of judges at last month's Union County Presentation Night.

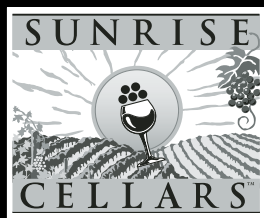
Mr. Szetela talked about Polish Easter baskets. Cynthia Lam gave a talk entitled "Improving Sex Education, One Story at a Time." Danielle Hill spoke about the labor exploitation of children in Third World countries, and Bryan Chen spoke about karaoke.

For more information about 4-H, contact James Nicznadowicz at jnicznadowicz@ucnj.org or (908) 654-9854, extension 2236, or visitnj4h.rutgers.edu.

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