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National RPS Bill Introduced on Capitol Hill

Washington, DC [RenewableEnergyAccess.com]

New legislation that would require many U.S. utilities to generate 20 percent of their electricity from renewable energy resources by 2020 was introduced Thursday by Congressman Tom Udall of New Mexico.

"The states have already shown us that renewable standards can be successful. The federal government should step in with its own standard so the entire country can enjoy the benefits of renewable energy. The nation's security and the health of our planet are too important to leave to the states."

- Alan Noguee, Union of Concerned Scientists, Clean Energy Program Director

House bill 969 proposes to "amend title VI of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish a Federal renewable energy portfolio standard for certain retail electric utilities and for other purposes."

The bill defines a renewable energy resource as solar (including solar water heating), wind, ocean, tidal, geothermal energy, biomass, landfill gas or incremental hydropower.

"A renewable portfolio standard should be passed this Congress," said Alan Noguee, Union of Concerned Scientist Clean Energy Program Director. "The bill gives the American people what they asked for in the election -- a smart, cost-effective strategy to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and get America on a track toward energy independence. And because power plants are a primary source of heat-trapping emissions, this bill can be an important part of solving global warming."

With Washington State's passage this fall of an RPS ballot initiative, 21 states and the District of Columbia now have renewable portfolio standards. Since 2004, eight states and the District of Columbia have enacted standards, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists.

In August 2005, Texas more than doubled its standard, creating the second-largest new renewable energy market in the country, behind only California. Seven other states (Arizona, California, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico and New Jersey) have also increased or accelerated their standards.

"The states have already shown us that renewable standards can be successful," said Noguee. "The federal government should step in with its own standard so the entire country can enjoy the benefits of renewable energy. The nation's security and the health of our planet are too important to leave to the states."

A 2004 Union of Concerned Scientist analysis of a similar bill calculates the multiple benefits from a national portfolio standard: By 2020, a 20 percent RPS would create 355,000 jobs -- nearly twice as many as electricity from fossil fuels would generate; competition from renewable energy generators would lower electricity and natural gas prices, saving consumers more than \$49 billion on their energy bills; and farmers, ranchers and rural landowners would earn more than \$16 billion in new income.

H.R. 969 is being co-sponsored by representatives Todd Platts (R-PA), Mark Udall (D-CO), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Chris Shays (R-CT), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and Jerry McNerney (D-CA).

For further Information

» [Draft of H.R. 969](#)