



UJAE Unions for Jobs And the Environment

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Local No. 1557

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Local No. 2227

President

Bill Cunningham

June 2, 2003

Dear Senator:

As you consider the Comprehensive Energy Bill (S.14), we would like to express our concerns with amendments that include measures to mandate reductions of greenhouse gas emissions or require a renewable portfolio standard for the electric power industry. These measures would adversely affect the future cost and reliability of energy, and have deleterious impacts on jobs and incomes of workers and consumers alike.

Any long-term effort to stabilize or otherwise affect the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases requires that *all* countries be part of an effort to limit or reduce CO₂ emissions. This is because CO₂ emissions quickly mix throughout the global atmosphere. This effort must include developing countries, which have the most rapid growth in CO₂ emissions as well as industrialized nations of the world.

The cost of reducing CO₂ emissions is high because there are, currently, no means available to reduce them except by curtailing overall energy use or by dramatically cutting consumption of domestic coal, America's cheapest and most abundant fuel. Alternatively, the Senate should encourage clean coal programs that promote cleaner and more efficient facilities.

We are concerned about proposals that were offered in Committee to mandate a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) which would have required that at least 10 percent of all electric generation by 2020 come from renewable resources. Such a requirement is too costly, and creates inequities among states. Prices would rise overall, while concentrating the greatest impact upon those states that must buy credits from others where appropriate sites are available for renewable facilities. We would support an accelerated research strategy designed to ultimately make "renewables" more economically competitive and less prone to the speculative and abusive manipulations that emerged from federal energy fixes of the 70's and 80's.

We support research and development of renewable energy sources, but it must be recognized that these fuels generally cost considerably more than conventional energy sources. Additionally, they are constrained by issues such as lower reliability levels and limited availability of viable sites. The cost of an RPS, especially on a time-frame envisioned in the Senate's earlier debate, is at best highly uncertain and at worst, very significant. Providing adequate, secure and affordable energy for America is essential for a healthy economy. We are concerned that costly measures that are likely to push up energy prices will further damage an already troubled economy raising joblessness and hurting consumers.

We urge you to reject mandatory climate change amendments and renewable portfolio standard in your deliberations over the Comprehensive Energy Bill.

Sincerely,

Bill Cunningham, President
Unions for Jobs and the Environment (UJAE)