

Montana Business Leaders for Clean Energy

September 25, 2009

Dear Senator Tester,

Many people and businesses in Montana, like others across the nation, are facing challenging economic times. However, as business and community leaders, we recognize these times also present an enormous opportunity to place our economy on a more solid foundation by positioning Montana businesses and communities to be winners in the emerging clean energy economy -- an opportunity to build and expand companies, create new and sustainable jobs, keep energy affordable and reliable, and address the biggest challenge of our time: climate change. Wind, solar, biofuels, smart grids, and other clean energy technologies and sectors are poised for explosive growth, as old energy faces ever greater supply, infrastructure, and emission constraints.

Several new reports estimate that investments in these new “green” technologies, energy efficiency, and renewable energy could create over 5 million new jobs nationally, while cutting carbon emissions, improving public health, and helping to stabilize energy costs. One such report, *Green Recovery: A Program to Create Good Jobs and Start Building a Low Carbon Economy*, by the Public Economy Research Institute, estimates that accelerated investments in a clean energy economy would create over 6,000 jobs in Montana. A new report from the U.S. Conference of Mayors estimates that by 2038, another 4.2 million green jobs could be added to the economy.

Montana is rich in renewable energy resource potential, but this potential remains largely untapped. For example, wind power is a “made-in-Montana,” affordable, and reliable source of clean energy -- **Montana ranks 5th in the US for *potential* wind energy production, but just 17th for *current* wind energy production!** With the right energy policies, Montana can see a surge in new jobs for Montanans and economic development in renewable energy, energy efficiency, green building, green technology, consulting, and related industries. The direct and indirect economic benefits would extend throughout the state, not only in new jobs but also in improved tax revenues and consumer energy cost savings.

To pioneer this new clean energy economy, we need your help to enact a comprehensive, sustainable, and forward-looking clean energy policy that will fuel business innovation and investment.

We call on you - our Montana congressional delegation, our Governor, and our State legislators to swiftly enact the nation’s leading clean energy policy that includes:

- **Renewable Energy Development and Energy Efficiency** – Set ambitious and specific goals, timetables, and policies for 1) renewable energy development that ensures natural resource protection; 2) energy efficiency standards; and 3) major reductions in fossil fuel use and emissions. To reach a goal of using at least 25% renewables by 2025, build a “smart” electric grid – one that is efficient and can accept input from many local participants, even household-scale wind and solar generators.

- **Tax Incentives** – Establish tax incentives for investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, to level the playing field with established energy sources, create incentives for businesses, and create certainty for clean energy developers and entrepreneurs.
- **Green Job and Green Business Training and Investment** – Support both the Federal Green Jobs Act of 2007 and inclusion of green jobs and business development training in any future federal energy legislation. Create and fund state-level job training programs to build and retain local workforces with expertise in the clean energy and energy efficiency industries.
- **Public Transportation Investments** – Make greater investments in a modernized public transportation system—one that expands and modernizes efficient rail and transit and increases local transportation, creates local jobs and business opportunities, and halts unnecessary spending on projects that deepen our dependence on oil and contribute to global warming.
- **Carbon Markets**— Support market-based carbon policies and emission trading systems that rewards farmers, land managers, and entrepreneurs for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and generates funds for public investment.
- **Public Investment and Assistance.** Ensure funds from carbon markets are used to support public investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, and assistance to low-income households so that there is not an unnecessary financial burden placed on low-to-moderate income people.
- **Plant and Wildlife Adaption** – As Montanans, our outdoor heritage is a cornerstone of our quality of life and our economy. Its imperative that, as we identify ways to reduce our carbon emissions and transition to a clean energy economy, we also dedicate resources toward safeguarding our plants, wildlife, and vital public lands from the effects of global warming.

Montana has great potential. Clean energy and green technologies could become keystone industries for us. Our private sector has the talent and resources to rise to this challenge. If we add a supportive policy environment, Montana can be a big winner in the clean energy economy.

Your policy leadership can make all the difference. During the Montana legislative session and during continuing debates in Washington, please join us to help build a world-class clean energy economy in Montana.

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