

December 2, 2010

Re: Solar Thermal as Eligible Renewable Resources

Dear Senator Reid,

We are writing to encourage you to ensure that solar thermal energy generation systems are included as an eligible resource in national renewable portfolio standard legislation. There has been widespread support for a national strategy for renewable energy that encourages the development of solar thermal energy, and a bipartisan bill like S. 3021 (proposed by Senators Feingold and Ensign) captures the key policy issues to ensure that cost effective energy generation technologies such as solar thermal are eligible resources.

Solar thermal is a proven technology that uses sunlight to heat water to high temperatures, and it is one of America's most cost-effective renewable energy resources. Solar thermal systems generate three times more useful energy for the same investment than current solar PV technologies. Heating domestic and industrial hot water uses a tremendous amount of energy in the United States, and solar thermal energy generation systems can play a significant role to meet this demand.

Many state-level renewable energy portfolio standard laws from Nevada to North Carolina already support both the development of solar thermal *and* solar PV systems. It makes economic sense to heat water with the sun as a complement to conventional fuels. Solar thermal is an ideal application for military, agriculture, hotels, colleges, hospitals, prisons, multi-family developments and other large-scale users of hot water. Solar thermal can dramatically reduce the amount of resources these sectors spend on fossil fuels and improve their bottom-line, thus making our nation more competitive and more secure. Solar thermal is a proven technology and countless large-scale solar thermal projects have been installed across the nation.

Solar thermal also creates a large number of American jobs in the manufacturing, distribution, assembly and installation of these projects.

One excellent example of solar thermal is the project to install systems on 900 homes of personnel stationed at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The project will displace the need for 2.6 million kilowatt hours of electricity, avoiding the release of 2,853 tons of carbon emissions per year into the atmosphere. This is the equivalent of taking 704 cars off the road or planting 28 acres of trees. The project was designed and installed by an American company and uses American made components, including solar thermal panels, tanks, controllers and pumps. The company installing this project has hired more than 15 local workers, providing a tremendous boost to the local economy.

The proposed Federal Renewable Portfolio Standard should be clarified to support both solar PV *and* solar thermal technologies. A national renewable strategy that incorporates solar hot water will enable utilities to achieve their requirement with a lower overall cost. The language contained in S.3021 sponsored by Senators Feingold and Ensign makes this clarification. S. 3021 also would allow two additional eligible renewable resources, geothermal and solar light pipe technologies, both of which also provide cost-effective options for meeting a national RPS.

Solar thermal should be considered a renewable energy resource rather than an *energy efficiency* measure. Renewable energy systems **generate** useful energy. Energy efficiency measures **reduce** energy demands. Solar thermal systems **generate** energy that displaces the need for electricity and other fossil fuels. Solar thermal projects generate heat, or BTUs. 3,412 BTUs are equivalent to one kilowatt hour of electricity. Just like electricity generation sources such as solar PV and wind, solar thermal energy generation can be easily metered and measured.

We are very appreciative of your efforts to pass comprehensive energy legislation. Transforming our energy economy and solving global warming will require everyone working together to make our country and the world a better place. As a highly cost-effective renewable technology, solar thermal will help our nation meet its clean energy targets. Please ensure that solar thermal is clearly included in the nation's Renewable Energy Standard.

Sincerely,

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Barton	McManus	Affordable Solar Hot Water and Power	Dothan	AL
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Mike	Murray	Artisan Solar	New Orleans	LA
Judy	Kosovich	Capital Sun Group	Cabin John	MD
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Gary	Clark	Clark Sustainable Energy	Heath	MA
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Eric	York	NTS Solar	Weymouth	MA
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Alan	Cook	Solar Hot Water Plus	Arcata	CA
Wayne	Wallace	Solar Source	Largo	FL
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Richard	Corcoran	Viessmann Manufacturing Company	Warwick	RI
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Cc:

Senator Daniel Akaka	Senator Herb Kohl
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison	Senator Jon Kyl
Senator Michael Bennet	Senator Mary Landrieu
Senator Jeff Bingaman	Senator George LeMieux
Senator Barbara Boxer	Senator John McCain
Senator Scott Brown	Senator Barbara Mikulski
Senator Sherrod Brown	Senator Bill Nelson
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Senator John Ensign	Senator Mark Udall
Senator Russell Feingold	Senator Tom Udall
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