

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 27, 2011

The Honorable Steven Chu
Secretary
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Dr. Chu,

We share President Obama's vision of a clean energy future and we applaud the commitment of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to the development and commercialization of new sources of domestically-produced, renewable energy. To that end, we write to request an increased focus at DOE on research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) for small and community wind power, commonly referred to as "distributed wind."

Distributed wind has been proven to improve rural economies, promote job creation, and enhance environmental quality, and can play a critical role in our emerging new energy economy. Moreover, due to the small and decentralized nature of the projects involved, distributed wind promotes energy security and enhances the development of clean energy without significant additional investments in electricity infrastructure.

Through consistent innovation and early adoption, the U.S distributed wind energy industry has become a world leader. American manufacturers currently dominate the market for small- and medium-sized wind turbines used in distributed applications. Ninety-five percent of the small wind systems (up to 100 kW) installed in the U.S. in 2009 were manufactured domestically.

Globally, this industry is poised to experience even more dynamic growth in the coming years, and the associated economic and job creation potential is quite substantial. However, we are at a critical juncture in the industry's evolution because of increasing investments by international competitors, most notably China. Increased investment in the domestic distributed wind industry is vital if we are to maintain our global leadership in distributed wind technology and deployment.

For these reasons, we urge the DOE to promptly expand Wind Program support for distributed wind, including technology and systems development, testing, deployment, and related activities. We also recommend that DOE dedicate a portion of its future budgets to distributed wind generation RD&D to ensure that this segment is an area of substantial and consistent focus in the coming years.

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Thank you for your consideration of these requests and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Tom Harkin

Patrick Leahy

Jim Johnson

Bob Sanders

Al Franken

Jon Tester

Copy to: H. Kelly, Acting Assistant Secretary
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy