



June 23, 2006

To the NH Energy Advisory Board's Stakeholders Forum:

The NH Sustainable Energy Association supports the goals of the New Hampshire Energy Plan. Our mission is to educate the public about energy efficiencies, renewable energy generation, and green building and to advocate in the for sustainable energy policies. We are New Hampshire's only statewide non-profit group focused specifically on renewable energy.

In less than three years, our all-volunteer board has built a database of just under 1000 people, a testament to the increased public awareness about the urgency of building a sustainable future. We have sponsored well-attended workshops on home energy auditing, photovoltaic systems design, building and remodeling energy efficient homes, and efficient biomass heating.

At our annual Green Buildings Open House, 1100 visits were made to 33 NH homes and commercial buildings. The general public was invited to see renewable energy technologies, energy conservation measures, energy efficient construction and sustainable building practices at work. Visitors spoke with the owners of these sites, dispelled myths, and saw the future. We hope that each member of this board, legislator, and NH citizen will visit homes on the tour this year: October 7th.

We participated in the renewable energy study committee (HB185) last summer and the coalition for the Renewable Portfolio Standard bill (SB314). We believe that passage of an RPS bill will both start NH on the road to greater energy independence, and benefit our state economy, stimulating the job market in a high-tech field, an area in which NH is known to excel.

We receive numerous calls each week from homeowners on many topics - but they most often ask specifically about NH's lacking financial incentives for renewable energy systems, common in surrounding states. A state incentive program empowers its citizens to invest in these technologies and reap the benefits, while also validating them. A large number of PV systems in the state will ease the stress on the grid on hot summer days when solar electricity is most plentiful and electric demand is most high.

We look forward to the Commission created by HB1146 which will further study the RPS, especially in terms of reviewing the successes of our neighboring states. We anticipate dispelling the myth that renewable energy generation will add new expenses to the rate payers. On the contrary, according to a Union of Concerned Scientists study, other states have found net savings by adding an RPS. As the price of energy continues to rise, that will become even more apparent.

We have three recommendations:

1. To pass a Renewable Portfolio Standards Bill, including incentives for large and small energy producers
2. To expand the SBC funding to include an incentive program for renewable energy systems for all the ratepayers that pay into that fund.
3. To pass legislation deleting PUC Order 900, Netmetering rules Part PUC 906.01 (a) (3) and (b) in its entirety. This concerns the inverter surge testing and type acceptance per NH Standards. NH's are different from ALL other states and unknown to some inverter manufacturers until after they have completed their UL certification. This was discussed at last year's hearings for HB 193/185. The legislators indicated this as an action item, but it has not come up in any 2006 bills. The order severely limits the number of inverters that can be installed in NH, often eliminating ones that are more reasonably priced but still of high quality.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Board.

Sincerely,

Mark Weissflog  
Legislative Chairman