



The Honorable Senator Kay Hagan
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hagan,

In his first address to Congress, President Obama called on the United States to increase the amount of energy generated from renewable sources, transmit this carbon-free energy to all Americans and avoid catastrophic climate change. The President specifically highlighted the pivotal role to be played by solar energy technologies in meeting this challenge, and has called for 25% of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2025.

Solar energy is affordable, carbon-free, and available in every region of our country. It is an economic engine that currently supports more than 70,000 well-paying jobs. Every megawatt of solar (enough power for 150 homes) that is manufactured and installed in the U.S. directly employs more than twenty four people for a year. Solar manufacturing, installation and system-operation companies employ more Americans per unit of energy than any other energy source. Thanks to recent Congressional leadership, the solar industry is expected to create an additional 60,000 jobs across the entire economy, install over a thousand megawatts of solar power and avoid more than 1 million tons of carbon emissions in 2009 alone. These figures will more than double in 2010.

Notwithstanding this tremendous potential, solar satisfies only a small percentage of America's energy needs. Currently less than 2% of North Carolina's energy comes from renewable sources, while the Solar Energy Industries Association estimates that rooftop photovoltaics alone could provide 18% of our state's electricity needs. That number increases substantially when you consider the potential of solar thermal systems and utility-scale generation. For the country to meet its renewable energy goals, combat global warming and wean ourselves from over-dependence on foreign energy sources, we must fully harness solar energy's potential. With the right support from Congress, solar can meet America's energy challenges of today and tomorrow.

Recently, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved a renewable electricity standard that would require 15% of electricity in the United States to be generated from renewable sources – including solar – by 2021. While this target is a good first step, it falls short of the President's goal. Senator Tom Udall has introduced an amendment to the energy bill which would increase the renewable electricity standard target to match the President's goal.

Our companies are already creating jobs and providing cheap, clean energy to thousands of North Carolinians utilizing solar power. Passing a strong national standard will accelerate the growth of our industry and enable our businesses to grow and thrive. **As solar pioneers in North Carolina, we strongly urge you to cosponsor S.433, which would amend the American Clean Energy Leadership Act to require that 25% of U.S. electricity come from renewable sources by 2025.**

As we have seen around the globe and in states throughout our country, the continued growth of renewable energy, and especially solar, depends on the right combination of public policies. Passing a strong national renewable electricity standard will show that the 111th Congress has taken the right steps to guarantee a clean, renewable energy future for the United States.

Sincerely,



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