

Renewable Energy - Growth and Opportunities for Rural Economies: U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Hearing



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06/25/2021

The Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy ("Subcommittee") of the United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry held a June 22nd hearing titled:

Renewable Energy – Growth and Opportunities for our Rural Economies

The witnesses at the Subcommittee hearing included:

- Mr. Shannon Schlecht, Executive Director, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, Crookston, MN
- Important to foster the renewable sector, including biofuels production in rural areas, and create revenue streams from the clean energy transition to help improve rural economies.
- Supports utilizing biomass for renewable energy
- Minnesota's renewable energy future is full of opportunity
- The Honorable Katie Sieben, Chairwoman, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, St. Paul, MN
- Low prices for electricity and natural gas are critically important for economic growth
- Calculation of socioeconomic benefits of clean energy build-out must consider tax impacts and job creation
- Transmission investments are needed across both the Midwest and throughout the United States (new transmission can maximize the value of low-cost, renewable energy)
- Mrs. Emily Skor, Chief Executive Officer, Growth Energy, Washington, DC
- Views biofuels as a solution to climate change and critical to the rural economy
- Supports policies to accelerate the use of biofuels such as:
 - Invest in infrastructure for E15 and beyond
 - Optimize the Renewable Fuel Standard
 - Ensure access to international markets
 - Support industry COVID recovery
- Mr. Bill Cherrier, Executive Vice President and CEO, Central Iowa Power Cooperative, Des Moines, IA
- Ongoing flexibility of electric cooperatives systems to meet energy needs of local communities requires calibrating power supply with local factors (i.e., one size does not fit all)
- Current federal tax-credit structure prevents not-for-profit electric cooperatives from taking advantage of the tax benefits to directly billed and owned wind and solar generation assets
- Supports providing the Rural Utility Service with the ability to allow electric cooperatives to refinance the interest on existing Rural Utility Service loans

- Mr. Matthew Mancuso, Dean, Industrial Technology, Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluff, IA
- Discussion of Iowa Western renewable energy educational program
- Wind energy has a large economic impact for state and rural communities (noting in Iowa there are over 5,590 wind turbines that produce over 34,139.4239 thousand megawatt hours in 2020)
- Increase of local tax revenue from the property taxes of the wind turbines assist with rural community development
- Wind technician workforce demand is both high and growing

A link to the written statements and testimony can be found [here](#).