

CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

March 14, 2008

The Honorable Byron Dorgan, Chairman
The Honorable Pete Domenici, Ranking Member
Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
186 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Dorgan and Ranking Member Domenici;

On behalf of the thousands of higher education institutions, organizations, students, industry partners, faculty, and administrators throughout the nation who are committed to helping the U.S. find a pathway towards a more sustainable energy future, we write to you today to urge you to fully fund the new Department of Energy "Energy Sustainability and Efficiency Grants and Loans for Institutions" program created by Section 471 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (PL 110-140).

As a major sector of society, higher education can play an important leadership role in accelerating U.S. energy independence and freedom from dependence on foreign oil by moving towards a clean energy economy. Higher education has the intellectual capital, moral position, and research capacity to take on such a leadership role. And leading society to such a low carbon and more energy-secure economy fits squarely within its educational, research, and public service missions.

Higher education has made a strong commitment to exert this leadership, as exemplified by The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. This high-visibility, joint and individual commitment to reduce and eventually neutralize campus greenhouse gas emissions has now been signed by nearly 500 colleges and universities.

These schools and many others who have made such commitments are now struggling to find the funds to make dramatic changes in reducing their carbon emissions and related energy bills. Higher education's collective energy bill is estimated to be \$8-10 billion annually, and energy expenses are generally the second largest budget line item after salaries for many campuses.

This new program will provide institutions of higher learning, school districts, local governments, and municipal utilities with loans and funding for capital projects that:

- 1) Develop renewable energy facilities;
- 2) Improve the energy efficiency of buildings;
- 3) Promote innovative energy sustainability projects; and
- 4) Provide funding to accelerate deployment of sustainable infrastructure.

We expect the outcomes of this program to include:

- providing other sectors with a model for moving towards a clean energy economy
- new thinking and technology for deploying alternative sources of energy, helping the US take back the lead from European countries in this arena, and
- significantly reducing college and university operating costs over time.

We thank you for considering this important request. Please contact James Elder, Director of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy (Elder@FundEE.org, 978-526-7768) with any questions about this letter.

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