



Wind Industry Takes a Longer View

June 7, 2011

American Wind Energy Association leaders at a conference in Anaheim last month called for a long-term extension of the production tax credit and a national renewable-energy standard.

Conference leaders touted wind energy as a bipartisan energy solution that can help create jobs in construction and engineering; boost local economies through tax revenue and land leases; and cut U.S. reliance on foreign oil and carbon-heavy coal.

"American wind power is a remedy" for energy problems, said AWEA CEO Denise Bode.

Conference organizers noted that more than half of the nation's states have renewables portfolio standards. They repeated calls for a national energy policy to set an RPS. Bode criticized the lack of a consistent, long-term renewable-energy policy, urging attendees to lobby their legislators.

"You can't have power at the turbine without power in Washington and at the state legislatures," Bode said.

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) agreed.

"This is not rocket science," Blumenauer said of a national renewables standard. He urged participants to raise the issue in their states and focus public and legislative attention on it.

"We need to make sure that people don't just nod and smile," Blumenauer said, noting that the long-term benefits that public investment, tax advantages and subsidies for renewables will bring to states must be understood. "We must make that clear to them all."

AWEA and various developers and financial leaders also urged renewing the federal production-tax credit, set to expire at the end of 2012. They noted that the extension needs to take place much earlier than it has in the past -- days before it expired -- to ensure investors and project developers can plan projects and financing.

Ted Turner also showed up to rally for wind energy, calling for the federal government to set long-term incentives and shift U.S. energy production toward renewables for environmental, economic and security reasons.

"It's time to move away from fossil fuels. It's past time," Turner said. "We're right and they're wrong."

Despite public support for renewables, the fossil-fuel industry has the money to inundate the airwaves with ads, he

added.

"I've seen so many commercials about clean coal," he said. "Makes me sick."

Turner called for the renewables industry to put more money into media and lobbying. He pointed to recent severe weather patterns -- hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes -- as the result of climate change prompted by fossil-fuel use. And he noted an unsustainable pace of human population growth and overuse of natural resources.

"We need to get serious about family planning," Turner said.

Meanwhile, Iberdrola Renewables Senior Vice President Don Furman argued that more renewables mean a need for more training and tools, such as weather-trend forecasting, flexible generation and ancillary services. Such flexibility -- large control areas, faster markets -- lets the grid absorb more renewables. Furman urged more funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for better weather modeling and computer forecasting, noting a huge payback would result on wind-integration costs.

Furman also touted the use of tradable renewable-energy credits, noting their flexibility and lack of need for transmission or integration.

"The utilities love TRECs -- it's a much easier way to comply," Furman said.

But leaving the associated energy in the market where the generation sits can impact the value of incumbent generators and stress the system. And TRECs don't displace the thermal generation in the purchaser's region, Furman noted.

- [Hilary Corrigan](#)