

Comments to the Idaho Interim Committee on Energy, Environment and Technology on the 2012 Energy Plan.

The 2012 Energy Plan needs to move Idaho forward not backward. Building on the 2007 Energy Plan is essential.

Energy planning and policy are critical to Idaho's future that can blend with the other Northwest states. Regional and national efficiency standards for such things as televisions, appliances and industrial equipment are part of the melding process.

The 2012 Plan needs to include tax incentives, regulatory actions and utility programs that invest in renewable energy and efficiency. Climate change is a wakeup call that urgency is paramount. The 2007 Plan and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's 6th Power Plan are unequivocal about energy priorities – 1) efficiency and conservation and 2) clean renewable energy.

The sun produces more clean energy in one hour than humans use in a year. Solar energy can play a significant role in decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels - less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere ameliorates climate change.

Solar power installations doubled in the United States last year and are expected to double again this year. More solar energy is being planned than any other power source, including nuclear, coal, natural gas and wind. "We are at the beginning of a turning point," says Andrew Beebe, who runs global sales for Suntech Power, which makes solar panels. (Idaho Statesman - 27 October 2011).

Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels installed on residential and commercial buildings can be integrated into the electric grid with minimal costs. Idaho's largest solar system is on the roof of Boise's Whitney Elementary School – 100-kilowatt system that is connected to Idaho Power Company's grid through net metering.

Panel prices are dropping so fast that some claim by 2016 solar will compete with fossil fuels even with shrinking federal subsidies.

Monetary incentives are essential to encouraging solar on a fast track that will contribute to energy solutions. Creative financing includes solar leasing and power purchase agreements. These tools are offered by some companies in some states that allow owners to forego the initial capital costs of a PV installation.

The committee needs to seriously consider a feed-in-tariff (FIT) policy to assist renewable energy development in Idaho. FIT policies and solar have worked especially well in Germany and other locations. Bob Johnstone's book – *Switching to Solar: What We Can Learn from Germany's Success in Harnessing Clean Energy* – is a great read.

FIT policies have been implemented in more than 40 countries around the world and are gaining traction in the United States. They are intended to boost expansion of the renewable energy industry via new technologies that provide significant economic benefits. A well-designed FIT can create conditions that attract capital to the industry and lowers costs.

Cost-based and value-based methodologies are several ways of estimating the value of renewable energy within a FIT. “Externality” costs like climate mitigation; health and air quality impacts and energy security of **conventional generation** are used in the value-based approach. Cost-based FIT payments use levelized costs of renewable generation plus a stipulated rate of return.

I believe the Interim Committee is up to the task of moving Idaho forward not backward by making substantial recommendations to the Legislature in the 2012 Energy Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Bert Bowler
Boise