



GREATER IDAHO FALLS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

November 4, 2011

Senator Curt McKenzie
Interim Committee Co-Chair

Representative George Eskridge
Interim Committee Co-Chair

On behalf of the Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce, its members and Board, please accept the following comments for consideration regarding the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliances 2012 draft Idaho Energy Plan.

The Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce is a service institution and an action organization. It provides a medium through which people can take effective action for the progress of the community, its region and the State. It helps create job opportunities through stimulation of industrial and commercial growth while seeking the improvement of community facilities; streets, highways, parks, schools, or in short its infrastructure.

In all of these functions the Chamber of Commerce is serving as a department, a partner of every business and every professional person in the area. The Chamber of Commerce functions through the working committees of the organization where careful study is made of the community needs and a program of work is designed. The goal is to create more dollars for more people and to improve the economic welfare of the community.

To this end, The Chambers Science, Technology and Energy Committee has studied the draft report in depth and strongly believes the State of Idaho's Energy plan should act as one of the most important pieces of policy in regards to the ability to maintain and enhance a stable, secure, affordable energy system.

In Addition, we are appreciative of the committee's role in creating a Strategic Planning Document that provides a global view, with general guidance and overall direction. By keeping the plan at a high level allows more detailed guidance to occur on an ongoing basis based on evolutionary change versus putting them in a position of attempting to reverse policy. We feel that flexibility is important to utilities as they navigate through the ever changing political, regulatory, and operational realities.

Following are a few points we feel need consideration:

- The plan should provide for resource flexibility and encourage diversity, which is key to maintaining Idaho's low electricity rates and retaining a broad variety of resource options for utilities.
- The plan should not adopt specific targets or standards related to renewable energy, conservation, or carbon reduction. Setting arbitrary targets could conflict with the goals of maintaining Idaho's low-cost energy supply and ensuring access to affordable energy for all Idahoans. Additionally, targets may not provide sufficient flexibility for Idaho energy providers to react to rapid development of new energy technologies.
- We feel the plan should place priority on cost effective energy efficiency, something public power in Idaho has committed to for decades and been very effective at advancing in our territories.
- The plan should emphasize the importance of transmission in providing reliable power and it recognizes transmission as a critical resource.
- The plan ought to retain energy siting as a local issue and recommends continuing the support of state agency resources through Energy Facility Site Advisory Teams for generation siting. It should encourage local jurisdictions to hear testimony about impact of facilities for citizens and businesses in neighboring jurisdictions and should largely defer to local land use planning.
- We commend the commission for including Nuclear and recognizing the value that it has in our state. The Nuclear industry, both related to business conducted by the INL and by other private industries, is a multi-billion dollar industry in this state. This can not be ignored. We do believe that there are legitimate organizations that will explore the possibility of building a merchant plant in our state in the future, if the economics play out. Meanwhile the indirect benefits that nuclear energy brings to our state are enormous and to ignore this would be inappropriate. We recommend keeping the entire language in the Nuclear section as written and would even welcome a longer discussion to further expand on the economic benefit nuclear energy industry has in Idaho.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime at 208-523-1010.

Sincerely,



Robb G. Chiles
President & CEO
Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce