



June 3, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Ranking Member Murkowski:

On behalf of the Energy Recovery Council (ERC), I would like to express strong support for the amendment filed by Senator Ron Wyden to define waste-to-energy as a renewable source of energy in the renewable energy standard (RES). Senator Wyden's amendment builds upon three decades of precedent in federal statute recognizing the recovery of energy from municipal solid waste as renewable. While waste-to-energy has been recognized around the world as an important tool in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and as a renewable source of electricity, the underlying RES provision being considered by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee unfortunately fails to recognize its benefits. By recognizing and capitalizing on the net greenhouse gas reductions and renewable energy provided by waste-to-energy, ERC believes that the legislation under consideration would be strengthened.

Waste-to-energy facilities produce clean, renewable energy through the combustion of municipal solid waste in specially designed power plants equipped with the most modern pollution control equipment to clean emissions. There are 87 waste-to-energy plants operating in 25 states managing about 7 percent of America's trash, or about 90,000 tons each day. The nation's waste-to-energy plants have a baseload electric generation capacity of approximately 2,700 megawatts to meet the power needs of more than two million homes. In addition, a majority of the nation's waste-to-energy facilities are owned by local governments that have invested in this critical municipal infrastructure to achieve long-term solid waste management solutions.

Since the inception of the commercial waste-to-energy industry more than three decades ago, policymakers have recognized municipal solid waste as a renewable fuel. The most recent statutory recognition came in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia also define waste-to-energy as renewable. In addition, the World Economic Forum in its 2009 report, "Green Investing: Towards a Clean Energy Infrastructure," identified waste-to-energy as one of eight technologies likely to make a meaningful contribution to a future low-carbon energy system.

Recognizing that the combustion of municipal solid waste produces clean, renewable energy is an important component of America's renewable policy. Adoption of Senator Wyden's amendment will promote energy independence, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support the communities that rely on this important technology. We respectfully request that you support Senator Wyden's

important amendment by either incorporating it into a manager's amendment or voting in favor during committee consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Michaels". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "S" at the end.

Ted Michaels
President

cc: Honorable Byron Dorgan
Honorable Ron Wyden
Honorable Tim Johnson
Honorable Mary Landrieu
Honorable Maria Cantwell
Honorable Robert Menendez
Honorable Blanche Lincoln
Honorable Bernie Sanders
Honorable Evan Bayh
Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Honorable Mark Udall
Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Honorable Richard Burr
Honorable John Barrasso
Honorable Sam Brownback
Honorable James Risch
Honorable John McCain
Honorable Robert Bennett
Honorable Jim Bunning
Honorable Jeff Sessions
Honorable Bob Corker