

Momentum grows for renewable electricity standard legislation

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WASHINGTON - A bill introduced by U.S. Senators Tom Udall (D-N.M.) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) to create a national Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) received an important hearing May 19 in the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The bill, S. 1264, would create jobs, save consumers money, and reduce pollution. In an effort to diversify the United States' energy sources and lead in clean energy production, the bill would require utilities to generate 30 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.

The hearing was a key step forward in order for the bill to receive a vote by the committee later this year.

"This legislation builds on the successful portfolio standard we've seen adopted in states across the country, including New Mexico," said Heinrich, a member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. "I commend Senator Udall for his leadership on this common-sense approach to reducing carbon pollution and creating good jobs, especially in our state where we have abundant solar and wind potential. Through American ingenuity we can slow the impacts of climate change, unlock the full potential of cleaner energy, and create a healthier more stable environment for future generations."

"This bill would help unleash our renewable energy potential in New Mexico and throughout the country, enabling us to lead the world in clean energy innovation and create hundreds of thousands of good jobs," said Udall, who first introduced RES legislation as a member of the U.S. House in 2002. "Combined with energy from traditional sources, this kind of smart investment in renewables is critical for our economy, our environment and our livelihoods. I want to thank Senator Heinrich for his support and for helping build momentum for the bill in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee."

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Senator Udall and Heinrich's bill received support during the hearing from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NDRC).

Franz Matzner, NDRC Director of the Beyond Oil Initiative Government Affairs Program, said in his opening testimony, “

A strong RES would significantly advance renewable energy and cut pollution. States that have embraced renewable energy standards have routinely met or exceeded the targets while growing jobs and reducing harmful pollution.

A '30-by-30' target would secure America's place as a global leader in clean energy while reducing carbon pollution by eleven percent below business as usual levels in 2030.”