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July 27th, 2007

Dear Representative:

The Jewish community has long demonstrated a commitment to advocating for energy policies that reduce our dependence on foreign sources, sustain our fragile environment and build a robust national economy. Next week, the House of Representatives is expected to consider a new piece of energy legislation. We believe that this legislation reflects those commitments and we urge you to vote yes on the House energy package, and yes on the amendment to implement a 20% Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) by 2020.

Our faith informs our tradition of sustainability, as our scriptures lay out a high standard for the treatment of the earth. The principle of “Bal Tashchit”, or prohibiting wasteful destruction, appears many times in the Torah, and the Talmud clarifies that this principle applies to wasting fuel (Shabbat 67b). Our commitment to energy security comes from more modern sources, but it is no less firm. We believe that American tax dollars should be invested in harnessing our own energy potential and fueling our economic growth, not pouring billions of dollars into the coffers of some of the world's most despotic and anti-American regimes.

This legislation draws from twenty two bills which were passed, many on a bipartisan basis, out of the House Committees on Energy and Commerce, Agriculture, Appropriations, Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs, Transportation and Infrastructure, Science and Technology, Oversight and Government Reform, Small Business, and Natural Resources. It also includes HR 1838, the United States Israel Energy Cooperation Act. The State of Israel shares our goal of energy independence and is also working to find advanced technological solutions to increase conservation and develop new sources of energy. Working with our close ally on these issues can only benefit both countries.

Passage of the House energy package and RES amendment would be an important step towards putting America on the path to greater energy security, a cleaner environment, and a stronger national economy built for the 21st century. It would do so by:

- Promoting homegrown alternative fuels by facilitating installation and conversion of E-85 fuel pumps and the production of flex-fuel vehicles that run on renewable fuel.
- Setting new efficiency standards to household appliances and promoting green buildings in the Federal and private sector.

- Creating a “smart” electric grid to update and bolster the reliability and energy savings of U.S. electricity supply.
- Authorizing \$3.5 billion over five year to develop better methods for growing, transporting, storing, producing and marketing cellulosic ethanol.
- Investing \$3 billion in the Energy-Water Appropriations bill to address global warming, including funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.
- Establishing a Commission on Climate Change to evaluate federal initiatives and make actionable recommendations.
- Calling on the United States to lead the effort to reach an international, binding agreement to require emission reduction commitments from all major emitters (including China, India and Brazil).
- Promoting U.S. exports of clean, efficient energy technologies to developing countries
- Authorizing a national assessment to determine the potential of carbon sequestration in various ecosystems.
- Encouraging “green jobs” by creating a training program to prepare workers for jobs created by federal energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.
- Providing small businesses with the tools they need to be more energy efficient including small loans and technical assistance to reduce energy costs.
- Directing the federal government (the largest energy consumer in the United States) to lead the way on reducing global warming by setting the goal of carbon-neutral government operations by 2050.
- Encouraging innovation by creating an Energy Department agency to coordinate high-risk, high-payoff energy technology research that the private sector may not pursue on its own and promotes research on solar, geothermal and marine renewable energy.
- Addressing carbon emissions in the transportation sector through initiatives that support states and localities that carry out energy efficient/alternative fuel transportation projects and encourage people to use mass transit.

The House energy package and accompanying RES amendment offer critical elements of a blueprint for America’s energy future. These, along with other important measures like increased CAFE standards, will enhance our national security, protect our precious environment, and grow our economy. We urge you to support this crucial legislation.

Respectfully,

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