

Compass Submission  
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## Seizing a Critical Juncture in Alaska's Renewable Energy Future

We are at a critical juncture in Alaska's renewable energy and energy efficiency future.

In the next few weeks, the Alaska State Legislature and Alaska's two US Senators have the opportunity to support proposals that will significantly increase Alaskan renewable energy production and our energy efficiency capacity.

Is this something Alaskans want? Yes. In a statewide poll by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates, 91% of Alaskans stated that they support developing more sources of renewable energy – like wind and solar power – for use in Alaska.

Who thought 91% of Alaskans agreed on anything? Elected officials, take note.

Currently there are two vital bills before the Alaska State Legislature that deserve to be passed before April 13<sup>th</sup>, the last day of session.

Establishing an essential Renewable Energy Fund for Alaska, HB 152 overwhelmingly passed the State House last year, and now requires approval by our State Senate. It also needs funding of at least \$250 million; an amount that is supported by Governor Palin and the public, as reflected in the large number of votes this option received in the Governor's on-line surplus poll.

SB 289 increases funding for home weatherization and energy efficiency. Recently, when addressing the State legislature, Senator Murkowski highly praised this legislation. This bill represents the quickest and most beneficial way to address the rising cost of energy.

Both pieces of state legislation are sound investments in our clean, low-cost, sustainable energy future. They will help our pocketbooks, our environment, and our Alaskan way of life.

Meanwhile, in Congress, several weeks ago the House of Representatives passed a critical bill to extend renewable energy production tax credits and energy efficiency credits. Unless extended, these important tax incentives will expire at the end of this year.

The ball is in the Senate's court.

The last time this issue came before the Senate in February, it failed by one vote – only receiving 59 votes. A new bill will be before the Senate in the next few weeks. It is vital

that Senator Murkowski and Senator Stevens know how important this is to Alaskans and vote for it.

Do we have meaningful renewable energy potential that will benefit from all of this legislation? Yes, indeed.

Alaska has geothermal resources in four large regions. Currently Chena Hot Springs Resort is successfully generating geothermal power with a low temperature (165°F) geothermal resource, displacing 150,000 gallons of diesel per year. Three additional large-scale geothermal electric power generation projects have been proposed, including Mt. Spurr.

With over 34,000 miles of coastline – more than the rest of the nation – Alaska has exceptional ocean power potential. For example, a study by the Electric Power Research Institute concluded that approximately 17 MW of power could be generated using tidal power at Cairn Point on Knik Arm. Recently eight preliminary tidal energy permits have been issued. Wave power potential in Southeastern Alaska is estimated at 1,250 TWh/year, which is about 300 times the amount of electricity Alaskans use each year.

And there is even a role for solar power in our state. As noted in the Renewable Energy Atlas of Alaska, produced by the Alaska Energy Authority, “For off-grid cabin owners, remote government installations, and other places where a relatively small amount of electricity is needed and proven generation options are limited, solar photovoltaics remain an excellent choice.”

Furthermore, Alaska has extensive wind potential, with Class 4 (good), Class 5 (Excellent), Class 6 (Outstanding) and Class 7 (superb) wind resources throughout much of the state. Wind projects in Kotzebue, St. Paul Island, Toksook Bay, and Kasigluk are demonstrably successful; and other projects at Fire Island, Eva Creek, Kodiak, Sand Point, Nikolski, Hooper Bay, Chevak, Gambell, and Savoonga are under review or planned.

The time for action is now. Supporting renewable energy is a win-win-win investment of our state surplus and a win-win-win vote by our elected officials.