



May 11th, 2007

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES AND ENERGY

Room 473B
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs and members of the Committee,

Last week several representatives of the agricultural community presented testimony relative to agricultural net metering before your committee.

On behalf of Massachusetts Farm Bureau and nearly 6,000 members we respectfully request that the committee include the agricultural net metering provisions of HB 3296 in any comprehensive energy reform package.

Rising input costs associated with on farm energy consumption are having devastating impacts on farm profitability and viability.

Agricultural producers stand ready to invest in farm energy independence and many have taken this bold step towards self sustainability.

Historically, many of our fuel sources are non-renewable such as #2 fuel oil, natural gas, and gasoline. The nature of many of these power sources is cyclical, as is the consumption of power by many of our farming operations. Some farms consume the vast majority of their energy in a one or two month span.

The current grant and loan structures are not sufficient to make such cyclical generation and consumption economical for agricultural producers. Allowing a farm to "bank" energy generated on an annual cycle would enhance the existing grant and loan programs.

The varied nature of agricultural operations will not create lopsided seasonal demand on the grid; demand will be spread over all seasons, and varied generation between biomass facilities, solar and wind should spread the generation between seasons as well.

The farm wide component section of this bill will allow farms that may have their processing facility or different sites several miles from a sole source of production, to meet that demand.

This bill provides a key step in the transition of agriculture from its' current dependence on fossil and other types of energy, to truly clean, efficient, renewable sources.

Again, thank you for your consideration. Our staff is ready to assist the committee in any way. Please contact Carl DeMatteo or Nathan L'Etoile with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex P. Dowse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Alex P. Dowse, President