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North Dakota Alliance for Renewable Energy (NDARE) Calls on State Legislature to Make Greater Investments in Renewable Energy

NDARE presents policy recommendations; Says ND has a “once-in-a-generation” opportunity to create greater wealth and more jobs through renewable energy

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Alliance for Renewable Energy (NDARE) presented a comprehensive report outlining steps North Dakota should take to foster greater development of its renewable energy potential.

Stating that North Dakota has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to capitalize on the growing demand for renewable energy and greater energy efficiency, the alliance presented its detailed policy proposals for six key sectors and areas: energy efficiency, wind, biomass, biodiesel, ethanol and carbon. The recommendations reflect the consensus of NDARE members, which are comprised of representatives from commodity groups, farm organizations, investor-owned utilities, rural electric cooperatives, state agencies, economic development groups, universities, banks, manufacturers, conservation and environmental groups, and private citizens. NDARE is dedicated to making North Dakota the preeminent state for the production and use of renewable energy and the practice of energy efficiency.

NDARE president Mike Williams says the group’s consensus can serve as a model for the state as it goes forward in deciding the state’s energy future. Williams stated: “Our members sat down and seriously looked at the renewable energy opportunities before us. Our report reflects the broad consensus of our members and builds on the accomplishments of the Midwest Governors Association, the U.S. Department of Energy, the Empower Commission and others. It is our hope that this document will contribute significantly to the discussion when we come together to decide our state’s energy future.”

Some of the highlights of the report include:

- Dedicating \$8 million over the next biennium Resources Trust Fund, which is dedicated to development of water projects and energy conservation and efficiency. This is in addition to Governor Hoeven’s current recommendation of \$3 million in funding for the Renewable Energy Council and \$2 million for the Biomass Energy Grant Program – recommendations that NDARE strongly supports. These funds would be administered by state agencies, including the ND Department of Commerce.
- Supporting a 10 percent ethanol and 5 percent biodiesel blend requirement for all fuels at retail.

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- Ensuring utility rate recovery for expanded energy efficiency programs and investments. Also, changing the North Dakota tax code to provide tax credits to taxpayers for renewable energy and efficiency development.
- Establishing a state Agricultural Sequestration Advisory Council aimed at increasing participation by agriculture producers in the growing market for providing agricultural carbon offsets such as no-till agriculture, conservation tillage, rotational grazing, etc.
- ND joining more than 40 other states as a member of The Climate Registry, a voluntary, third-party registry to track and account for greenhouse gas emissions and reduction activities. ND's membership in the Registry will help industries in the state receive credit for early action in a future federal CO2 regulatory program.
- Invest a portion of the state's general fund surplus into a commercial scale application of next generation energy technologies in which ND has a comparative advantage and will economically benefit the state.
- Protect the wind rights and interests of both landowners and energy project developers by having the Public Service Commission (PSC) develop rules governing the siting of wind turbines relative to wind rights and property boundaries.
- Encourage the development of enhanced geothermal energy in the state.
- Encourage community and local ownership of renewable energy and efficiency projects. This will create greater local wealth and increase the retention of that wealth in the state.

Williams emphasizes that the report's recommendations are sensible and aimed at not only improving energy efficiency but also expanding the state's economy. "We are talking about harnessing our potential and translating that into economic development that will benefit all North Dakotans."

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