



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Grassley: Wind Energy is a "Breath of Fresh Air"

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today introduced legislation to promote clean, efficient wind energy.

"The bill is called the BREEZE Act, and I hope it'll be a breeze to get it passed into law," Grassley said. "The wind is a clean, abundant natural resource. Harnessing its power makes perfect sense, especially in times of energy shortages and soaring prices. Wind energy is a breath of fresh air."

Grassley's bill is called the *Bipartisan Renewable, Efficient Energy with Zero Effluent (BREEZE) Act*. He introduced it with 12 bipartisan co-sponsors. The measure extends the production tax credit for energy generated by wind for five years. The current tax credit is set to expire on Jan. 1, 2002.

Grassley authored the *Wind Energy Incentives Act of 1993* to give wind as an alternative energy source the ability to compete against traditional, finite energy sources. He believes that a production tax credit is critical to the expansion and development of wind energy.

Iowa is a major producer of wind energy, Grassley said. Iowa has four new wind power projects ready to go online just this year. These four projects, with the ultimate capacity of more than 240 megawatts, will join the already existing 20 facilities in Iowa. Even large petroleum producing states such as Texas are recognizing the growing potential of wind energy. Texas has the third-largest wind farm in the world and plans to add five new facilities this year, adding to the seven already online.

Grassley said experts have established wind energy's valuable contributions to maintaining cleaner air and a cleaner environment. Every 10,000 megawatts of wind energy produced in the United States can reduce carbon monoxide emissions by 33 million metric tons by replacing the combustion of fossil fuels, Grassley said.

Nationwide, more than 900 megawatts of new wind energy capacity was added just last year, bringing wind energy generating capacity in the United States to more than 2,500 megawatts, Grassley said. The new capacity alone will power the equivalent of more than 240,000 homes.

Equally important, wind energy increases U.S. energy independence, thereby providing the United States with insulation from an oil supply dominated by the Middle East, Grassley said. National security is threatened by a heavy reliance on oil from abroad.

Grassley said the price of wind energy has been reduced more than 80 percent in the past two decades, making it one of the most affordable types of renewable energy. To continue this investment in America's energy future, Congress must extend the production tax credit, Grassley said.

Wind energy also has vast potential to contribute to California's electricity supply, Grassley said. California is suffering because of an energy market with insufficient energy generation and production that is overly dependent on natural gas.

Grassley said just in the past few weeks, plans have been unveiled to develop what will be the world's two largest wind power plants in the Northwest. One will be installed on the Oregon-Washington boundary, and the other at the U.S. Department of Energy's Nevada Test Site. Together, the two plants will have a capacity of 560 megawatts and will generate enough power annually to serve more than half a million people. In addition, a number of other new projects coming online this year in the West will also bring much-needed additional generating capacity to the region.

Wind energy also produces substantial economic benefits, Grassley said. For each wind turbine, a farmer or rancher can receive more than \$2,000 per year for 20 years in direct lease payments. Iowa's major wind farms already pay more than \$640,000 per year to land owners. In California, the development of 1,000 megawatts would mean annual payments of approximately \$2 million to farm and forest landowners.

"Wind energy is reliable, renewable, inexhaustible, environmentally safe and homegrown," Grassley said. "It's so good that we need a lot more of it. I look forward to working toward the success of this bill."