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Committee Passes Energy Tax Bill With Many Grassley Initiatives

WASHINGTON -- The Committee on Finance today passed a bipartisan energy tax incentives bill including numerous pieces of environmentally responsible alternative energy legislation that Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, has championed for years.

“It makes sense to use the tax code to develop alternative energy,” Grassley said. “Cutting taxes is an effective way to encourage positive, environmentally conscious ways to produce electricity. I’m glad to work with Chairman Max Baucus to put together a good, green energy package.”

The committee passed the bill on a voice vote. Grassley tax priorities in the bill passed include:

- ▶ Wind energy. The bill includes Grassley’s pending legislation, the *Bipartisan Renewable, Efficient Energy with Zero Effluent (BREEZE) Act* (S. 530), to extend the production tax credit for energy generated by wind for five years. The tax credit expired Jan. 1. Grassley authored the *Wind Energy Incentives Act of 1993*, which established the first-ever wind energy production tax credit.
- ▶ Biomass. The package includes Grassley’s bill, the *Growing Renewable Energy for Emerging Needs (GREEN) Act* (S. 756), which extends the tax credit for the production of biomass, which Grassley authored and which became law in 1992, and expands the definition of biomass to include saw dust, tree trimmings, agricultural byproducts and untreated construction debris. Also included is the extension of the tax credit for the production of electricity from poultry waste.
- ▶ Biodiesel. The committee accepted an amendment from Grassley and Democratic Sen. Blanche Lincoln, with support from non-committee members Republican Sen. Tim Hutchinson and Democratic Sen. Mark Dayton, to provide an income tax credit and excise tax rate reduction for biodiesel fuel mixtures. These new incentives will encourage the production of biodiesel, a clean-burning alternative fuel made from domestic renewable sources, such as soybean oil.

Grassley noted that Iowa is the nation’s largest producer of soybeans and is home to two biodiesel plants. “Our vegetable oils are plentiful, and our energy needs are great,” Grassley said. “Biodiesel is an environmentally sound way to fill the gap between energy supply and demand.”

- ▶ Small ethanol producer credit. The new legislation expands the definition of an eligible small ethanol producers so small cooperative producers of ethanol will receive the same tax benefits as large companies. It also clarifies that the tax credit can flow through to the patrons of the cooperatives. Grassley's legislation, the *Tax Empowerment and Relief for Farmers and Fishermen Act* (TERFF) (S. 312), includes these provisions.

Grassley has a long history of promoting ethanol as a clean-burning, renewable, domestically produced energy source. He scored a major victory for the Midwest when he not only blocked anti-ethanol efforts, but also countered by orchestrating congressional approval to extend the ethanol excise tax exemption to 2007.

- ▶ Fuel taxes. The bill moves a portion of the taxes from gasohol – gasoline blended with ethanol – into the Highway Trust Fund to ensure that fuel taxes are used for highways, not unrelated government programs. Grassley and Baucus agreed on this issue after an energy hearing last July.
- ▶ Energy-efficient appliances. The package includes legislation Grassley originally authored and co-sponsored in this Congress, the *Resource Efficient Appliance Incentives Act* (S. 686), to encourage the manufacture and use of super energy-efficient washing machines and refrigerators with a tax credit for the production of those appliances.
- ▶ Swine and bovine waste. The package includes Grassley's legislation, the *Providing Opportunities With Effluent Renewables (POWER) Act of 2001* (S. 1219), which provides new opportunities for energy production, a useful method of waste disposal and increased farm income by creating a production tax credit for electricity generated from swine and bovine waste.