



AMERICANS for  
**ENERGY LEADERSHIP**

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April 28, 2010

The Honorable Byron Dorgan  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy & Water Development  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy & Water Development  
2256 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Dorgan and Representative Visclosky,

We the undersigned presidents of American university and college student government associations, writing on behalf of more than one million students across the country, urge you to support the Department of Energy's "REgaining our ENERGY Science and Engineering Edge" (RE-ENERGYSE) proposal and fully meet the FY2011 budget request for \$55 million.

RE-ENERGYSE represents the nation's first comprehensive federal program to support clean energy education programs and train thousands of new energy scientists and engineers. We believe it is a critical step toward creating new energy industries and jobs while regaining American leadership in the global clean energy industry, which promises to be one of the largest new growth sectors.

The United States is rapidly falling behind in the burgeoning clean energy industry – especially in comparison to China – and our educational system and workforce is not prepared to compete. The U.S. energy industry could experience a 40 to 60 percent retirement rate over the next five years, and the majority of our colleges lack degree programs focused on energy. For example, only 106 of the country's over 6,500 post-secondary institutions offer focused courses in renewable energy technology and efficiency, of which only 24 are universities, according to the Interstate Renewable Energy Council.

The U.S. energy workforce deficit and education gap will significantly constrain the nation's ability to develop its clean energy industry, capture opportunities for growth, and accelerate clean energy development at home and abroad. The federal government has started to address the need for green technician training, but it has not implemented a higher education strategy to keep the U.S. at the leading edge of energy science, technology, and entrepreneurship.

Fifty years ago, immediately after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the United States mobilized to lead the space race and regain our scientific and technological competitiveness. Federal investment in higher education was a cornerstone of our competitive strategy. The National Defense Education Act of 1958, for example, trained thousands of young scientists and engineers who helped put a man on the moon and develop the technologies that catapulted our world into the Information Age.

Today, the global clean energy race represents one of the greatest challenges and opportunities for American leadership. If we do not implement a national strategy for energy leadership – including smart investments like RE-ENERGYSE to develop highly skilled clean energy scientists and engineers – we will miss a historic opportunity to strengthen our economy, create new jobs, improve our energy security and lead the world in confronting climate change.

American students are ready and willing to rise to this national challenge, and we need the federal government to support our education and training. We urge you to fully fund the RE-ENERGYSE initiative for FY2011, and we thank you in advance for your support.

Cc: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development

Sincerely,

1. David Gobaud & Angelina Cardona, President 09-10 & President, Associated Students, Stanford University
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3. Jarrod Wolf, President, Student Government, University of Chicago
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