



MAY 7, 2015

TO: CHAIRMAN NESBITT AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENERGY POLICY COMMITTEE

FROM: KEITH DEN HOLLANDER, CHAIRMAN, CHRISTIAN COALITION OF MICHIGAN

RE: HOUSE BILL 4297 AND MICHIGAN'S RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARD

The Christian Coalition believes that it is crucial that America become energy independent, and that we can achieve that independence with an "All of the Above" energy policy. There are very few areas of our lives that are not in some way touched by energy policy. Whether it be the cost of living, the cost of goods or services, our creature comforts, or our national security, or even our health, these all tie intricately to good energy policy.

Our members care about energy policy for all of these reasons and more. From protecting our troops to protecting the health and life of the unborn, energy policy has moral implications.

Currently, more than 60% of Michigan's electricity comes from coal. This heavy reliance on coal for most of our base-load generation means that Michigan sends \$1.2 billion (and the jobs that money supports) to other states every year to pay for coal.

The Christian Coalition of Michigan believes that we have a real opportunity to pass forward-looking energy policy that creates jobs right here in our state and protects our natural resources. As coal plants shut down across Michigan, we will meet our future energy needs through a combination of natural gas, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Michigan must leverage our competitive advantage when it comes to natural gas. We're sitting on one of the nation's largest fields of untapped natural gas which can play a major role in meeting our energy needs. By utilizing this Michigan reserve, we can stop hemorrhaging \$1.2 billion annually to feed our addiction to out-of-state coal. Instead, let's spend that money in state and supporting local jobs and economies.

As any investment counselor will point out, diversity is key to a retirement portfolio and we believe the same principle applies to electric generation. While natural prices are currently low, we must diversify our energy mix to protect consumers and businesses from price volatility. Our current inability to export natural gas has kept prices artificially low, but once our ports are retrofitted to allow for export, the Military Advisory Board's Center for Naval Analysis believes that Michigan will see a sharp increase in price, along with the rest of the country.

Through renewable energy, we have an opportunity to lock in 20-year rates that are half the cost of burning coal. We have an obligation to protect families and businesses from sharp price increases by requiring a certain percent of our electricity to come from renewable sources. We've met a 10-percent standard while maintaining reliability and affordability, and it's time to set the bar higher. Going back to our investment analogy, a 90/10 split is not diverse.

We recognize that not all forms of renewable energy can account for base load electricity generation. While sources like hydro, bio-mass, and digesters can provide base load, sources like wind and solar can provide a viable, affordable

supplement to base-load generation and work well in conjunction with natural gas in particular.

The Christian Coalition of Michigan supports the position that more should be done with renewable energy sources to advance a truly “All of the Above” energy strategy and further diversify generation. Producing more energy here at home and creating more jobs in our state makes sense as part of a “No Regrets” energy policy. Michiganders are incredibly talented and innovative. Whether it is our engineers or our factory workers, people here in Michigan are already working to create the kinds of innovative technologies that will drive the energy advancements of tomorrow.

Adopting an “All of the Above” approach to Michigan’s energy future is good, sound conservative policy. We strongly encourage your committee to continue exploring the untapped potential of renewable energy, and to adopt a policy which will increase in Michigan’s renewable energy production.

I look forward to working with the Legislature to build an “All of the Above” energy policy that creates jobs, saves money and protects God’s earth for our children and future generations to enjoy.

Respectfully Submitted,

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