

**DRAFT DO NOT CITE****District of Columbia**

July 27, 2011

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The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
204 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support Amended S 1108 10 Million Solar Roofs Act of 2011

Dear Senator Bingaman:

On behalf of the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), I am writing to urge you to **support S 1108 10 Million Solar Roofs Act of 2011, with an extension of the technologies that the program considers for permitting and regulation streamlining to include other clean energy technologies.** This bill and its established competitive grant program would remove numerous barriers to adoption of domestic energy options and create incentives for market development that will reduce the cost of domestic clean energy.

COG is dedicated to increasing the adoption of solar and other clean energy technology solutions. COG's Climate and Energy Action Workplan has a goal of 10,000 solar roofs in the region by the end of 2012. At the end of 2010 there were over 1,000 solar roofs installed in the Washington region for a capacity just under 10 megawatts (MW). COG members Arlington and Loudoun Counties have community energy plans that call for over 260 MW of solar installations by 2040. The region is working with EPA's Green Power Partnership to conduct a cooperative solar procurement which could develop 30-40 MW of solar generation. The COG region is committed to solar power as a solution to reducing the region's dependence on foreign energy sources.

COG's Integrated Community Energy Taskforce is considering the use of other clean energy technologies such as district energy, combined heat and power and microgrids, in addition to solar power. These technologies face similar zoning, permitting and regulatory hurdles that will slow adoption. We believe this proposed grant program could be used to reduce the hurdles to adopting a variety of solutions that will work together to increase the production and reliability of domestic clean energy.

Local governments are an integral piece in the adoption of these technologies because of their control of permitting and zoning requirements, as well as influence over groups such as homeowners associations. A grant program that would encourage streamlining

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the regulatory and permitting processes for clean energy technologies across regions, states and the nation would help achieve market certainty and catalyze market growth, just as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program helped to stimulate the widespread adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.

We urge you to support an amended S 1108 10 Million Solar Roofs Act of 2011 and lessen the burden of regulatory and permitting barriers to implementing and developing the market for a variety of clean energy solutions that will increase our nation's energy independence.

Thank you for giving this your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jay Fiset, Chair
Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee

cc: Senator Bernie Sanders, Sponsor
Secretary Steven Chu, U.S. Department of Energy
National Capital Region Congressional Delegation:
Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin
Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski
Sen. Mark R. Warner
Sen. Jim Webb