



“Energy: Get Involved to Find a Balanced Solution”

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COULD YOUR FAMILY AFFORD A 40% INCREASE IN YOUR ELECTRIC BILL?

We at BEMC don't think so either.

That's why we're working hard to inform all of our members of the issues involved in finding a balanced solution for America's energy policy. We must ensure a reliable supply of electricity that is also environmentally sound. American ingenuity has and will always produce creative solutions to meet these new challenges.

One of the most vexing problems in our world today is climate change and American innovation is our key to facing it head on.

It is clear that the President and Congress will address the issue of climate change, and we must be involved to help them find the right solution - a solution that marries America's tradition of developing cutting-edge technology with our fundamental respect for the land on which we live and the air we breathe. The wrong solution will cause steep increases in electric bills for families, businesses and our economy as a whole. We can't solve the issue of climate change by placing impossible burdens on the backs of hardworking Americans. It's time for us to get real about energy.

Any legislation to decrease carbon emissions must be balanced. It must avoid long-term economic consequences to consumers and the economy. It must have achievable targets and tangible benefits. Priority should be given to policies that lower energy costs by improving energy efficiency because such policies would help alleviate financial burden to consumers.

The call to make reliability and affordability of electricity the central considerations in climate change legislation is the call to do the right thing, to choose significant, long-term greenhouse gas reduction that imposes the smallest increases in energy bills. The wrong choices on the issue would devastate our economy and our future. So, what are the right choices?

BEMC, along with cooperatives across the state, proposes the implementation of a broad range of new technologies over the next two decades. We propose reducing carbon dioxide emissions dramatically, but in a way that softens the impact to already increasing energy costs. Congress must focus on technology development to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and keep the timing of reductions more in line.

A sensible plan to protect the environment and our economy must include:

Consumer Protection - Consumer price protections must be put in place to mitigate harmful economic conditions on the end consumers of electricity.

Careful Timing - Any defined emission reduction targets must be achievable and timed with the advancement and commercialization of technologies.

Regulatory certainty - Utilities need to know the rules of the road if they want to keep the lights on. Further, the rules cannot change once a non-reversible decision has been made and should provide a uniform playing field for the entire country to avoid detrimental regional economic impacts. One size does not fit all when it comes to implementing renewable energy programs. National maps show that renewable resources are not available equally in all areas, so national policy must allow for regional differences. In NC, we already have a workable state mandate . . . let's give it a chance to work.

All sectors must be included - Every entity that produces greenhouse gas emissions must be included in the legislation, not just electric generation.

World-wide effort - It's not just the United States producing CO₂. A world-wide effort is needed to make a measurable CO₂ emission reduction.

Let's look for lower cost solutions that are sustainable over time and get us to the goal - energy independence and protecting our environment. This isn't about fear, it's about getting it right and without breaking the bank.

I urge all BEMC members and consumers everywhere to speak up to Congress as they consider this issue. YOU can make a difference on this issue that's critical to our future. Let your Congressional representatives know that they need to **find a balanced solution** for climate change.

Co-ops in North Carolina and other southeastern states have set up a program that makes it very easy for you to voice your opinion, in your own words, by putting you directly in touch with the office of your Congressional representatives by either telephone or email.

Contact your Congressional representatives today! Log onto www.findabalancedsolution.com or call toll-free **1-877-40BALANCE**. (877-40-225-2623)

Through all of this, our priority is you, our members, and bringing you affordable, safe, reliable power that is also environmentally responsible. Together with each member of our co-op, we can and will make sure our community always shines bright. Together....we can.

This is the final article in our Energy series. All six articles are available at www.bemc.org (About Us page, CEO's Blog).