

George's decency doesn't stop at the Capitol door, either. When he isn't here—during the few hours each year we let the staff out—George actively supports charities. He loves riding his bike, and he loves it even more when he's getting contributions for every mile he rides.

While he will tell you that he loves his work here, just ask him about his children, Sam and Lizzie. You'll see what love really means by the sparkle in his eyes. And we were all thrilled when George married Donna earlier this year. His departure from our little world means that he will have even more opportunities to love and care for them, and even his cat, Tom. But I warn you, George, cats don't always love you back.

I will miss George Withers cheerful counsel personally. The Congress will be poorer for his departure. But the real accolade is that people around the world who will never know his name have better lives today because George Withers was part of this House.

I yield back the balance of my time, noting that the House should be honored that George O. Withers yielded so much of his time to us.

AMENDING TITLE VI OF PUBLIC UTILITY REGULATORY POLICIES ACT OF 1978

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2002

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce legislation that amends title VI of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish Federal renewable energy portfolio standard for certain retail electric utilities.

As we in Congress have attempted to develop a national energy policy, some say that a long-term sustainable energy plan is impossible. They say that renewable energy and energy efficiency are pipe dreams, and they say the U.S. will never be able to break its reliance on traditional energy sources like oil and coal. I disagree.

Now, in the post-September 11th world, the renewed conflict in the Middle East shows us that we cannot continue to rely on imported oil from that region. When my father, Stewart Udall, was Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. imported 20% of its oil. My father argued that we shouldn't import more than 20% of our oil on national security grounds. Today, we import 53% of our oil, 47% of which comes from OPEC countries; by 2020, the United States will import 62% of its oil.

Even more frightening, world production is expected to peak some time in the next few decades, possibly as early as 2007. That means that as energy demand increases more and more rapidly, the world's oil supply will be proportionally diminished.

While energy production has brought tremendous prosperity and allowed us to grow our economy at unprecedented rates, non-renewable forms of energy are responsible for many of the greatest environmental threats to America's well-being.

Consider this, less than 2% of this nation's electricity is generated by non-traditional sources of power such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy. During the period from

1973–1991, smart investments were made to develop new technologies that made our energy use more efficient without affecting economic output. These investments curbed the projected growth rates of energy use in the United States by 18% from what they would have been without the investments.

Unfortunately, the U.S. spends only one-half of 1% of its energy bill on research and development. Sixty percent of that money is wasted on the country's failed experiment in nuclear energy. Less than one-third of the nation's tiny research and development budget is spent on renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly interested in Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), which I believe paves the road for the development and investment in clean energy technologies and local economic development. RPS, in my mind, clearly serves as model for tomorrow's small and medium businesses to draw a profit from their own environmental responsibility.

In the Senate version of H.R. 4 there is a provision, which proposes that retail electricity suppliers (except for municipal and cooperative utilities) be required to obtain a minimum percentage of their power production from a portfolio of new renewable energy resources. The minimum energy target or "standard" would start at 1% in 2005, rise at a rate of about 1.2% every two years, and peak at 10% in 2019.

I applaud the Senate for including an RPS provision in the Energy bill, which the House failed to include in our energy package. However, I believe that we are capable of going further than the 10% peak in 2020 and believe we should set the standard higher to around 20%. As I mentioned earlier, less than 2% of this nation's electricity is generated by non-traditional sources of power such as wind, solar, geothermal, etc.

My legislation would add an additional 10% on top of the 10% set to peak in 2020, and would achieve this goal within 5 years. Consequently, 20% of retail electricity supplier's power production would be from a portfolio of new renewable energy sources in 2025.

Consider the following:

Wind farms in the Pacific Northwest are producing energy at a price of 3 cents per kilowatt-hour. This is less than the current price of power from natural gas. With a little encouragement, wind energy could become economically viable around the country, and this means a tremendous level of energy self-sufficiency for the U.S. Using wind as an energy source, twelve Midwest states alone could generate three times the total U.S. electricity consumption.

Solar power, one of the most well known forms of renewable energy, also has potential for the future. The cost of solar energy has dropped by 90% since the early 1970s, and scientists and industry groups predict the price will drop another 66% by 2020. Solar energy, if properly developed, could go a long way towards freeing the U.S. from its dependence on coal. Just 10,000 square miles of solar panels would supply all of the nation's electricity needs.

And just a few weeks ago, the Public Service Company of New Mexico and FPL Energy LLC, based in Florida, signed an agreement to build in my congressional district one of the nation's largest wind generation fields near Fort Sumner in eastern New Mexico. Har-

nessed by 136 twirling turbines, wind will be used to create electricity in the first large-scale renewable energy operation in the state.

Wind will make up less than 4 percent of the power generated by PNM, and this project has the hope of becoming the first of many wind farms in the state and an example of using and developing new technologies for renewable energy use.

A RPS makes good economic sense to help states diversify their energy market, increase their work force, and help revitalize communities who have little to no economic development.

Currently, the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission is working on passing a Renewable Portfolio Standard for New Mexico that would require electric utilities to generate 10% of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2007.

Mr. Speaker, our dependence on coal, oil and other traditional energy sources is unsustainable. To protect our environment and our economy, we must turn off the dead end street that our energy non-policy has been leading us down, and start down a path of energy productivity and sustainable, environmentally sound production.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGHLIGHTER

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2002

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the students and staff members involved with Rocky Mountain High School's student newspaper, Highlighter, for winning the 2002 Colorado High School Press Association Newspaper Sweepstakes for the second consecutive year on October 3, 2002.

Under the guidance of Rocky Mountain Highlighter newspaper advisor and language arts teacher Stephen Wahlfeldt, these dedicated and resourceful students worked tirelessly through the school year to create an informative and professional newspaper. The Lobos ultimately achieved victory over 63 other participating schools in the Sweepstakes, and kept the title of "Colorado's best high school newspaper" in Fort Collins for at least another year, through six first-place and three second-place awards.

Crucial wins in the individual categories came from Erin Ortmeier for Critical review writing; Leigh Pogue, Baker Machado, and Ortmeier for Sports Feature story; Joy Bloser and Brett Burnett for Feature Photograph; Kristen Frank and Burnett for Sports Photograph; and Jenny Ackerson, Carolyn Whitten and Burnett for Front Page Layout. The Rocky Mountain Highlighter also proved its superiority in the esteemed General Excellence category. Additionally, Jack Meiter, Kendall Miller and Burnett won second-place for Personal Opinion Column, as did Brent Barentine for Graphic Illustration. The entire staff collaborated to place second the Headlines category.

These journalists involved in Highlighter are commended for their achievements and praised for their pursuit of excellence. These young men and women are primary examples of the vast potential of future generations. Go Lobos!