



November 1, 2011

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
United States Senate
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester and Senator Risch:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), I am writing to express our support of the Public Land Renewable Energy Act (S. 1775). This landmark legislation would extend royalties and lease income from solar and wind projects developed on Federal lands to states and counties. In addition, S. 1775 would continue the 25% county revenue sharing agreement for geothermal development on federal lands, provided by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C 15873(a)).

Similar to existing revenue sharing models for energy development, the Act would share revenues with states and counties, while providing reinvestment in BLM renewable energy programs and sharing critical funds to sustain wildlife and recreational uses of nearby land. Revenues sharing arrangements with local governments are needed to support county operations impacted by local energy development and production.

Hundreds of counties nationwide have Federal lands within their boundaries that have been developed or are suitable for alternative energy development. Counties have historically been indispensable advocates for the development of alternative energy production in the United States. Future revenue sharing dollars will contribute to the delivery of critical governmental services and the development of much needed capital improvement projects such as road maintenance, public safety and law enforcement, conservation easements, capital for leveraging federal and state resources, and the critical stabilization of operations budgets in tough economic times.

As this nation moves closer to securing a balanced domestic energy portfolio, state and local governments are committed to working with the Federal government as equal partners in the promotion of alternative energy development. The expansion of green energy industries will lead to the creation of high paying jobs and sustainable economic development.

Again, NACo applauds the introduction of the Public Land Renewable Energy Act of 2011 and respectfully ask for swift passage of this landmark legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Larry E. Naake'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'L' and 'N'.

Larry E. Naake

Executive Director

National Association of Counties