



## Section 3: Introduction

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### In Search of New Energy Solutions

The nation and the world are searching for new energy solutions. Population growth and economic expansion – including the added pressures of India and China’s burgeoning economies – are driving an unprecedented demand on finite energy supplies. Oil reserves are limited and are located in politically volatile parts of the world. At the same time, the United States is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign oil, directly compromising national security. The cost of oil has skyrocketed over the past three years, and the price of natural gas has fluctuated wildly. Electricity demand is projected to increase 30 percent in the United States by 2025<sup>7</sup>. Beyond these concerns, the burning of fossil fuels is harming air quality and resulting in the release of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

We as Americans are confronting one of our greatest challenges in decades: finding clean, affordable and secure sources of energy to meet the needs of the nation. We cannot continue on the path of “business as usual.” Throughout our country’s history, we have overcome challenges and advanced our standard of living by setting ambitious goals and driving innovation. We electrified rural America. We built the inter-

state highway system. We sent a man to the moon. Through innovation, resourcefulness and resolve, we can meet the energy challenge we face today through the realization of the 25x’25 vision. Our nation’s farms, forests and ranches can provide solutions from the land to meet the energy needs of the country.

### The Role of Agriculture and Forestry in Meeting Our Energy Challenges

Corn and soybean producers have shown how the agricultural sector can become modern-day energy providers – but America’s working lands can play a much larger role in providing renewable forms of energy. Through emerging technology, farmers, ranchers and forest landowners can produce biomass feedstocks and turn wood, plant residues, processing byproducts and animal wastes into value-added energy feedstocks and biobased products. They can generate electricity by harnessing wind, solar energy and capturing and converting biogas emissions. And they can dramatically increase the production of liquid transportation fuels. What is more, all regions of the country will have a role to play in providing solutions from the land. The diversity of energy sources needed to achieve the 25x’25 goal will require the contribution of resources from all regions of the country.



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7 EIA (2007). *Annual Energy Outlook*, (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/index.html>).