

## **Renewable energy is a job creator**

### **Washington must not miss chance to set prudent policy**

By Bill Richards and J. Read Smith

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U.S. energy policy is in free fall as partisan politics undermine bipartisan support for renewable energy. While we struggle with a weak economy, excessive unemployment and high fuel costs, Washington remains gridlocked in its efforts to create a brighter, more secure energy future.

Last month's House funding debate epitomizes this stalemate. While approving some disaster relief for Americans buffeted by natural disasters, House members voted to offset disaster relief funding with deep cuts to DOE clean-energy programs, a shortsighted move that could damage our economic recovery.

Both sides claim that jobs and job creation are essential to reinvigorating the U.S. economy. Yet their posturing threatens the government with another shutdown, and gamesmanship blinds them to the need for a long-term, stable energy policy to generate jobs and revitalize our economy.

The 25x'25 Alliance has released a University of Tennessee Bio-based Energy Analysis Group report which demonstrates how pursuing the 25x'25 vision — meeting 25 percent of our nation's energy needs with renewable resources by 2025 — would create billions of dollars in economic activity and millions of new jobs.

According to "25 percent Renewable Energy for the United States by 2025: An Analysis on Jobs Created By Meeting the Goal," growing renewable energy feedstocks and harnessing the sun, wind, water and heat from the earth to produce energy would generate an estimated \$208 billion in new economic activity and 1.4 million new jobs by 2015 — and that includes \$2.3 billion and 21,500 jobs in Tennessee in four years. Overall, an estimated \$646 billion in new economic activity that leads to the creation of 4.7 million new jobs across the country (including \$12.5 billion and 155,700 new jobs in Tennessee) would result from achieving the 25x'25 renewable energy goal.

But in order for this to become a reality, lawmakers must back away from rhetoric — this is NOT a partisan issue — and pass responsible policies that will return the United States to a position of leadership in the global economy.

Budget decisions, whether short- or long-term, must protect and strengthen funding for foundational programs — such as the farm bill energy title programs and DOE's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy programs — that will allow our evolving renewable energy sector to reach full potential.

There has never been greater need for public policy and funding to maximize the economic benefits of our nation's vast sustainable resources. If elected officials and policy makers are serious about economic recovery and jobs, they must refrain from divisive sound bites and instead work together for a U.S. energy future that is economically secure and environmentally sound.

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