



News Release

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Working to Make Certain Electricity Doesn't Become a Luxury

A new national poll regarding climate change and the concept of cap and trade auction legislation showed an overwhelming 80 percent of respondents agree; Congress should not enact any legislation to combat climate change without being certain of its impact on the cost of electricity.

A group of Indiana utilities echo that sentiment and add that certainty is also needed in order to effectively plan for the future. The Partnership for Fair & Affordable Energy will hold a press conference Friday, June 5 to address the recent movement of climate change legislation and discuss the group's work to keep energy affordable for Indiana consumers.

"We believe that something will be done on the climate change issue, either by Congress or the Environmental Protection Agency," said Bruce Graham, chief executive officer of the Indiana Statewide Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. "Our goal is to work with the public, Congress and other policymakers to craft a solution that is both environmentally effective - and cost effective, while ensuring safe and reliable power for everyone."

The non-profit, consumer owned utilities in Indiana formed the Partnership for Fair & Affordable Energy to achieve that goal. Partners include the 39 electric cooperatives in Indiana, Hoosier Energy Rural Electric Cooperative, Wabash Valley Power Association, Indiana Statewide Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, the Indiana Municipal Power Agency and its 52 member municipalities.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved H.R. 2454, "The American Clean Energy and Security Act," on May 21 after four days of mark-up. "There was considerable improvement to the bill from its original draft. Indiana's municipal utilities and electric cooperatives want to thank our political leaders for their work to address a number of issues that would have been costly for consumers," said Raj Rao, president of the Indiana Municipal Power Agency.

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Graham and Rao note, however, that there significant improvements still need to be made to protect consumers - improvements that should be considered as the bill works its way through the House. As many as eight House committees have jurisdiction over parts of the draft and want to review the language. But House leadership this week announced an accelerated deadline for consideration by those Committees. It is a schedule that may not allow Congress to responsibly and thoroughly examine a bill as complex as this one.

Rural electric cooperative and municipal utility leaders will discuss the climate change legislation, the goals of the partnership and their efforts to develop a diversified energy portfolio in a media event on Friday, June 5 at 11:30 a.m. The event will be hosted at the Indiana Statewide Association headquarters located at 720 N. High School Road, Indianapolis, Ind.

Besides Graham and Rao, presenters will include Steve Smith, president and chief executive officer of Hoosier Energy, and Rick Coons, president and chief executive officer of Wabash Valley Power Association.

“We believe a properly crafted cap and trade system can work to curb emissions,” said Smith. “But as this bill stands now, and without an opportunity to address additional concerns, the only certainty is higher electricity rates in Indiana.”

“We want to be sure that Hoosiers are aware of the possible impact of cap and trade proposals being considered,” said Coons. “This isn’t about stopping reasonable legislation – but we do need to find an affordable and reasonable solution. Electricity is a necessity. We want to make certain it doesn’t become a luxury.”

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