

Florida's Energy Bill (H.B. 7117) Talking Points

Objective

- To secure a stable, reliable and diverse supply of energy.

Situation Analysis

- While Florida's supply of energy is relatively stable and reliable, more than half of the electricity produced in this state comes from one source.
- Increasing diversity in our state's energy portfolio is imperative to minimize risk, improve energy security, ensure long-term sustainability and foster economic development.

Florida's Energy Bill

- Florida's energy bill is designed to increase diversity in the state's energy portfolio, expand energy production and create much-needed jobs for Floridians.
- H.B. 7117 is the first comprehensive energy bill passed by the Florida Legislature in four years.
- The bill reinstates tax credits for investments in renewable energy technologies and production.
 - These tax credits will assist companies producing renewable energy and creating new jobs.
 - All forms of renewable energy in Florida, including biomass, solar energy, geothermal energy, wind energy, ocean energy, waste heat or hydroelectric power, are eligible.
 - The marketplace will determine what form renewable energy investment will take.
 - To be clear, these tax credits are not energy subsidies like the federal grants that funded Solyndra. Rather, they are tax credits toward actual spending, investment and hiring that takes place. Only the projects that benefit Florida will receive tax credits in return.
- The bill requires the department to evaluate utilization of the tax credits on an annual basis, demonstrating impact of policy and holding recipients accountable.
- The bill requires utilities to report energy resources proposed, produced or purchased in Florida and how it will impact present and future capacity and energy. Utilities will include this information in their 10-year site plans submitted to the Public Service Commission (PSC).

- The bill calls for an independent evaluation of the Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act (FEECA) to determine the costs to the ratepayers, the incentives and disincentives associated with the act and if the programs create benefits without undue burdens on the customer.
- The bill promotes energy efficiency across state government. It requires the state to identify opportunities to increase energy efficiency in government buildings by establishing benchmarking and reporting requirements for energy consumptions by state-owned buildings, 5,000 square feet or more.
- In addition, the bill features measures that will reduce burdens on businesses by repealing outdated and counterproductive regulations.
 - The bill makes clear that the sale of unblended gasoline – gasoline with no ethanol – is not illegal. With the passage of this bill, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will develop a website to inform consumers where in Florida they can purchase unblended gasoline.
 - The bill reduces regulatory burdens on electric vehicle charging stations by defining vehicle charging stations as a public service.
- Finally, this bill will repeal the renewable portfolio standard (RPS) mandate enacted by Governor Charlie Crist in 2008.
- H.B. 7117 is a modest step in the right direction for Florida. Collectively, these measures will expand energy production, stimulate job growth and increase diversity in Florida's energy supply over the long term.