

## Solar Action Network Alert

On the basis of the most recent intelligence, the 2004 energy bill is likely to be brought to the Senate floor for debate sometime around April 9th. The bill, S. 2095, was introduced by Senator Domenici (R-NM) a week ago. Through a joint decision of the Senator Domenici, Senate Majority Leader, and Tom Daschle, (D-S.D.) the bill will proceed to full debate-without committee consideration.

The debate was initially anticipated for this week. However, because of other pressing legislation, e.g. medical malpractice and liability of gun manufacturers, the S. 2095 debate has been delayed. It is possible that the debate has been postponed because of increasing opposition to the bill. Senator Domenici hopes to use the time between now and opening of debate on the Senate floor to limit and identify amendments.

Senator Domenici has heralded the bill's \$14 billion price tag and its promise of 800,000 new jobs. The price tag of 2003 energy bill was \$31 billion.

With the exception of the "Safe Harbor Provision" relieving MTBE producers of any civil liability for environmental damage, there is little difference between the 2004 and 2003 energy bills.

The cuts in some cases are real but most are illusion. The largest cut comes from deleting the Safe Harbor provision for MTBE, a water-polluting gasoline additive. Safe harbor would have shifted responsibility for environmental damages caused by these substances from their producers to taxpayers.

Other changes in the bill include dropping some programs and delaying by a year or more the implementation of others. The fact is that S. 2095 is a thinly disguised version of the 2003 bill.

The current bill does little to weaken the grip of traditional energy interests, or to diminish the environmental damage of fossil and nuclear energy sources. S. 2095, like its predecessor, could cause significant harm to the environment and begin the process of opening federal lands to energy development.

## Action Needed

The United States needs a successful national energy policy. S. 2095 is flawed because it perpetuates support for energy sources that harm the nation's health, security and environment. S. 2095 reflects the desires of the energy industry, when it should respond to the needs of the nation.

As individuals or chapters please do the following:

.. Write or phone your Senators and Representatives asking them to vote NO on S. 2095.

.. Encourage your Congressional representatives to use the coming year as a time to ask constituents what they think the nation's energy policy should be. They will find that most want the U. S. to lead the way in the development and use of domestically available sustainable energy sources-not continued reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels.

.. Ask your representatives to cooperate with members on both sides of the aisle in the House and in the Senate in crafting a national energy policy that reflects constituent priorities, and not simply the wishes of large petroleum, coal and nuclear energy companies. America wants and needs a sustainable energy policy. S. 2095 is a step in the wrong direction.

.. Acknowledge that the defeat of S. 2095 could have damaging consequences on such sustainable energy technologies as wind.

.. Encourage your representatives to enact separate legislation for extending the production tax credits for wind and other sustainable energy sources.

Please contact your Senators and Representatives soon. It is possible that numerous constituent contacts will result in the bill's consideration being indefinitely postponed. Should S. 2095 be brought to the Senate floor, ASES will issue other alerts updating information and encouraging additional communications with members of Congress.

See the most recent issue of Sunbeam (Jan/Feb 2004), 2004 Energy Bill for additional details on S. 2095. <[http://www.ases.org/chapter\\_newsletter/2004/JF04/JF04.html](http://www.ases.org/chapter_newsletter/2004/JF04/JF04.html)>

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