



June 15, 2009

Wisconsin Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Re: Docket #05-EI-148

Dear Commissioners:

Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Public Service Commission's docket on advanced renewable energy tariffs. The members of WFU – the family farmers, ranchers and rural citizens of Wisconsin – thank you for your consideration of this important energy policy item. By allowing for stable contracts for the purchase of locally-owned, community-generated power, the PSC can help to allow Wisconsin farmers and rural residents to become national leaders in renewable energy production.

Statewide, uniform, renewable energy buyback programs are more equitable than other renewable energy policies that tend to favor larger, institutional projects that have sufficient tax liability to use federal tax benefits effectively. They help stabilize the marketplace for the development of renewable energy, reduce the volatility of future electricity prices, lower the long-term cost of electricity and reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

The use of buyback programs will help to capture some of the funds that are shipped out of Wisconsin for the purchase of fossil fuels. Wisconsin residents spend more than \$21 billion on fuel each year – money that could be retained through the promotion of renewable energy production, especially on a small-scale, local level. State leaders have already expressed their willingness to move these programs forward, as Governor Doyle has a stated goal for Wisconsin to produce ten percent of the renewable energy in the United States. With Wisconsin's tradition of strong agricultural production, we are clearly positioned to meet that goal when coupled with favorable buyback rates.

Given the current economic troubles that face farmers in Wisconsin, renewable energy production has the potential to provide a much-needed steady stream of income. WFU members have expressed their interest by the dozen to install wind turbines, solar panels or biogas producers on their properties so as to offset large portions of their monthly energy bills by generating their own power. This frees them from the burden of extreme price fluctuations in energy costs and allows them to make money by selling their excess energy into the grid. Farmers are eager to help solve our energy problems – now is the time to allow them to do so.

Thank you for your dedication to fostering the growth of small-scale renewable energy in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Sue Beitlich, President