



April 26, 2010

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### **Concerned about House Energy Bill, FREPA Pursues Energy Ballot Initiative**

The Florida Renewable Energy Producers Association (FREPA) has concerns about HB 7229. While the currently debated HB 7229 allows for more renewable energy in Florida, it does so mostly to the benefit of investor-owned utilities' bottom lines and does not create a competitive market in Florida. It also eliminates all references in statute to the work that has been done by all stakeholders at the behest of the Governor's 2007 executive order, which was the catalyst for HB 7135 in 2008 and provided a roadmap to a competitive renewable energy marketplace in Florida.

A top concern is that HB 7229 eliminates all references to Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards (RPS) and emissions reductions. Moreover, it transparently allows investor-owned utilities to bypass the Public Service Commission review process with regard to cost, while encouraging self-building of plants by utilities and self-ownership of renewable projects...not the competitive markets which encourage better cost review and benefit consumers.

As a result, we have begun working with citizens, organizations and supporters to pursue a ballot initiative for 2012 that would create a competitive renewable energy market in Florida through a **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)** and a **Public Benefits Fund** policy. It is clear that the Florida legislature is not willing to pursue a renewable job creation policy and create the type of competition which allows independent renewable energy developers to place energy projects in Florida. The group believes a ballot initiative will let the people decide.

"FREPA certainly supports the increase of renewable energy generation in Florida, but we also believe that the best way to get there is with a sustainable policy infrastructure which encourages competition and dependability within the market if we are to have a real industry in Florida," said FREPA President Michael Dobson "There is still time. Hopefully, the senate will fix these problems in the bill that could be considered 10 steps backward and three steps forward ...to perhaps nowhere. We maintain that a Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, coupled with the Public Benefits Fund, is the best way forward for a competitive and sustainable renewable energy industry in Florida."

Many believe a federal energy policy is coming; by having its own RPS in place first, FREPA believes Florida has a better opportunity to lead this policy and have more say in what our energy future looks like.

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