



# Power Facts

An informational publication for members of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative concerning electricity and related subjects.

September 2009

## **This year Congress is expected to vote on legislation that will increase energy costs for families and businesses.**

Proposals being considered by Congress would require the nation's electric utilities to increase renewable energy resources and pay a tax on carbon emissions. If these measures pass as currently written, your electric rates could increase by 40 percent or more. Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative is working with members of Congress to help ensure they get this right, but it's important for you--the consumer--to tell your Congressional representatives to remember the folks back home as they vote on energy-related legislation. We are asking you to participate in the "Find a Balanced Solution" campaign.

### ***What is the Find A Balanced Solution campaign?***

Electric cooperatives and their members are asking Congress to find a balanced solution to energy policy, one that marries America's tradition of developing cutting-edge technology with our fundamental respect for our land and air.

### ***What is cap and trade?***

Cap and trade is a system of regulation used to control environmental emissions by industry. Congress is considering legislation that would apply a cap and trade system to carbon dioxide emissions. In its most basic form, a limit is set on the amount of carbon dioxide a source is permitted to emit over a given time. Allowances for emissions are then allocated and auctioned off to allow entities to meet the limits while using market forces to curb overall emissions.

### ***How will cap and trade cost families thousands more a year?***

Because there are currently no limits on carbon dioxide emissions, new regulations would mandate many costly changes in the economy, especially in the electric power industry. Least

cost alternatives for new electric generation will be replaced with more costly fuels. Electric cooperatives will be forced to compete with large corporations and speculators to purchase allowances. All of these additional costs will ultimately be paid by consumers, adding thousands of dollars per year to electric bills.

### ***How will cap and trade put thousands of people out of work?***

Economic growth is directly tied to the availability of reliable and affordable electricity. By driving up the price of electricity through a cap and trade system, Congress is proposing to not only slow economic recovery from the current recession but also drive many companies operating on the margins out of business. Companies unable to afford any increase in energy costs will be forced to shut down or move their operations overseas - costing thousands of jobs.

### ***What are cleaner traditional sources of energy?***

Nuclear power generation is carbon-free and already a part of Virginia/Maryland/Delaware's energy portfolios. Electric cooperatives are also engaged in

cutting-edge work to develop new technologies to reduce emissions from coal-fired power plants by capturing and storing carbon dioxide, but those options are not yet ready for commercial application. Both traditional sources of energy must be part of any sustainable long-term solution.

### ***What is the balanced solution?***

Electric cooperatives propose reducing carbon dioxide emissions dramatically, but doing so in a way that softens the impact to already soaring energy costs. Any action by Congress must focus on technology development to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and make the timing of reductions more in line with technology developments.

### ***What can I do to help?***

Tell Congress your story. Let your elected officials know how you will personally be affected by increased energy prices.

### ***How can I contact my members of Congress?***

Call 1-877-402-2526-23 to be connected directly to your Congressman's office or visit [www.FindABalancedSolution.com](http://www.FindABalancedSolution.com).

# Cost Does Matter!

It's time for you to join us in telling Congress... Cost does matter! It's easy for you to contact your senators. Simply log on to [www.FindABalancedSolution.com](http://www.FindABalancedSolution.com).

If you prefer to contact them by phone, dial toll-free:

1 - 8 7 7 - 4 0 2 - 2 5 2 6 - 2 3 .

A recorded voice will tell you how to be connected to your representative's office. Following is a suggested dialogue for your phone call to Congress:

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm calling from \_\_\_\_\_ (your city or town).

I'm calling today to ask you to consider my family's budget, as well as others back home, as you and your colleagues begin crafting and reviewing energy-related legislation. I believe that you can create a comprehensive policy that keeps electricity affordable, and I need you to know that rising energy costs have a major impact on my life.

Can I count on Senator \_\_\_\_\_ to find a balanced solution to energy legislation?

If you wish to make additional points, consider these:

- Please guarantee that your constituents will continue to receive reliable and affordable electricity. Remember that what may be affordable by Washington D.C. standards may not be affordable to me.
- There are regional differences in renewable energy resources, and I ask that you share any costs equitably across all geographic regions. Please don't punish some regions, like the Southeast, for its lack of renewable resources.
- Allow diversity in power supply fuels, including renewable energy, clean coal, and nuclear energy. Also remember that energy efficiency is an important component of any power supply mix.
- Accelerate the most critical technological research and development to help ease costs to consumers in the long run.

**If you live in Virginia,  
call Senator Mark Warner and Senator Jim Webb.**

**If you live in North Carolina,  
call Senator Richard Burr and Senator Kay Hagan.**