

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Energy and Water Development
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Energy and Water Development
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Feinstein:

We are writing to urge you to provide robust funding for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) and the Wind Energy Program in FY2020 Appropriations. The Senate has consistently demonstrated strong bipartisan support for the Wind Energy Program, and we ask that you keep this support in consideration as you begin forming the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. This funding is necessary in order to continue supporting rural communities, advance domestic energy independence, and ensure America remains a leader in wind energy technology.

The Wind Energy Program has a proven record of accomplishment in supporting research and technology development at national laboratories that improves the efficiency of U.S. wind power and lowers consumer costs. As new markets for wind energy and technology open in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, the U.S. should aim to be the exporter of technology, innovation, and equipment, not cede technological innovations to governments overseas.

The program also conducts important work to increase the advancement of distributed wind, dominated by small businesses helping rural America prosper. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates distributed wind could be deployed at an additional 49 million sites in the U.S. alone. Approximately 99% of wind turbines are located in rural communities, and in 2018, wind turbines produced \$289 million in annual land lease payments in the United States. Therefore, we also advocate for robust funding for distributed wind research and development.

The Wind Energy Program also plays a critical role in innovative industry research. The Department of Energy (DOE) and its partner agencies have facilitated testing for hardware and software solutions to mitigate potential impacts from wind turbines on radar, as well as ongoing work to study the interactions between wind energy and wildlife and develop detection and deterrence technologies. The Wind Program's collaboration with other DOE technology offices in the transmission and grid integration space has been beneficial to all energy technologies in diversifying, bolstering, and modernizing the nation's electric grid.

If we continue to invest in wind, this American success story will continue. In 2018, the wind industry employed more than 105,500 workers, and wind turbine technician is America's

second-fastest growing job. Additionally, the wind industry employs veterans at a rate that is 50% higher than the national average. Accordingly, we strongly advocate for funding levels that will allow DOE to move forward with assisting industry in developing state of the art technologies, computing abilities, and critical research on wildlife impact mitigation technologies, market barrier reductions, grid integration, and aviation safety technology that continue to drive the domestic wind energy sector. Without this support, we cannot continue to enhance the development and deployment of this homegrown energy source.

We appreciate your support on this issue.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



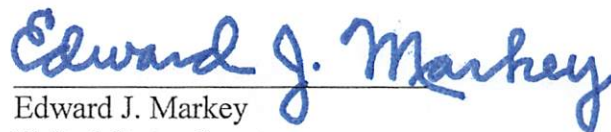
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



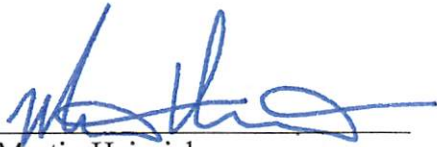
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



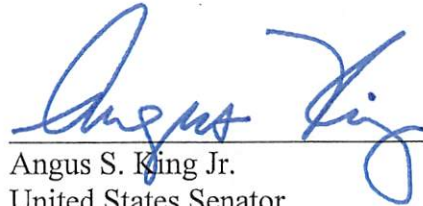
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



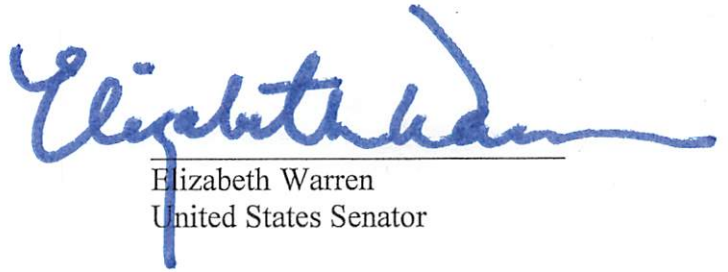
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator