

Top Story

Clean Energy Legislation Must Come in July: Daschle, Industry Leaders

With energy legislation on tap to be taken up on Capitol Hill next month, the call for a national renewable electricity standard reached near fever pitch this week as former Senator Tom Daschle joined AWEA and a coalition of clean energy supporters in calling on the White House and Senate leadership to draft and pass strong clean-energy provisions.

Daschle, a strong supporter of wind energy during his time in the Senate, hosted a press conference on Capitol Hill on Wednesday along with AWEA CEO Denise Bode, Acciona North America CFO Susan Nickey, REPower CEO Steve Dayney, and TPI Composites, Inc., President and CEO Steve Lockard. Daschle is providing strategic advice to AWEA as it gears up to persuade Congress to pass a renewable electricity standard (RES) this year.

The day before the press conference, [the coalition of clean energy organizations that was announced last week](#) sent a letter to President Obama and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) urging that energy legislation be taken up upon the Senate's return from recess on July 12 and that it include four fundamental elements: a strong RES, robust and predictable tax and other financial incentives for projects and manufacturing including extension of the Treasury Grant Program, renewable energy infrastructure provisions (e.g., transmission), and certain energy efficiency measures.



Photo credit: Mannie Garcia

Former Senator Tom Daschle and AWEA CEO Denise Bode underscored the urgency of clean energy legislation passage.

Daschle and industry leaders urged that an energy bill with clean energy provisions get done when Congress returns in July from its Independence Day recess. Calls for energy legislation have increased, partially as a result of the Gulf oil spill, a disaster that has hurt many people along with the environment, but one that Bode also reiterated was “a teachable moment.” Daschle echoed the urgency of the situation.

“We must pass an energy bill during the month of July,” he said. “It is terribly urgent that we do so.”

The reason for the urgency is multifold, Daschle and other speakers said. Politically, the relatively narrow window of opportunity has opened for energy legislation to be taken up by Congress. Moreover, speakers said, the wind industry and the economy can't wait. Bode spoke of companies in the supply chain “that are not getting orders” because of various market dynamics including policy uncertainty, while Daschle said that jobs are waiting in the wings for a clear and certain policy signal to be sent into the marketplace.

“We have no choice,” said Bode. “It's urgent that we get this legislation done.”

“The wind industry is a global business,” said REPower's Dayney, explaining that companies inevitably will pour their capital into global markets that show strong support for renewables. “If Congress acts, it will send a strong signal to the market.”

Susan Nickey, Acciona North America's financial chief, provided firsthand evidence that the market is struggling amidst the current climate of policy uncertainty, noting that her company has seen a slowdown in its first-quarter activity. The company's business stretches across the supply chain; it is both a developer and turbine manufacturer.

“The moment [to pass legislation],” she said, “is now.”