

RMFU commends House vote on Clean Energy and Security

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Recently, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU) sent a letter of support to members of the congressional delegation from Colorado and New Mexico who voted to pass the amended Clean Energy and Security bill last week.

“This was a tough vote,” RMFU President Kent Pepler said. “When the bill came out of committee, Farmers Union opposed it because it was so unfair to the family farmers and ranchers who have taken their stewardship of the land and water seriously for generations. Fortunately, with the leadership of Representative Collin Peterson (D-Minn), the House made important changes to the bill.”

Pepler is a Mead farmer. “We are actively fighting for renewable energy,” he said. “We support sustainable agriculture through conservation efforts, and we are doing what we can to balance America’s food needs against degradation of the environment. The amended bill takes agriculture’s positive role into account.”

RMFU supported the amended bill, which contained a handful of changes that recognized agriculture’s role in the mitigation of climate change. “Farmers Union asked for a half dozen changes. We wanted the bill to recognize the efforts of ‘early adopters’ who are part of our carbon credits program. We have a science-based program of carbon sequestration in place, and we asked that the agricultural and forestry programs of the Clean Energy Act be administered by the USDA to continue those good efforts. Above all, we wanted the portions of the program that directly impact us to be administered by people who understand agriculture.”

RMFU has been a leader in renewable energy development. “Agriculture has changed a lot since the Depression. Today farming and ranching depend on energy to run trucks and tractors. Clean energy is a win/win for us. Using renewable energy will reduce our production costs, and clean energy gives us new crops to harvest – wind, sun, and biofuels – for new profits.”

Pepler singled out Betsy Markey (Dist 4, Colo.), Martin Heinrich (Dist.1, N.M.), and Ben Luján (Dist. 3, N.M.) for special praise. “With the alarmism and misinformation circulating in our rural communities, even after the bill was modified, it took real character to vote ‘Yes.’ We are proud of their integrity and confident that rural Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming will see a net benefit as the Clean Energy Act helps us deal with the pressing problems of climate change.”

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