



# WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION



February 16, 2009

Wisconsin Public Service Commission  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Re: Docket #05-EI-148

Dear Commissioners:

Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Public Service Commission's docket on advanced renewable energy tariffs. The members of WFU – the family farmers, ranchers and rural citizens of Wisconsin – are posed to make great contributions to renewable energy generation in our state. By allowing for stable contracts for purchase of the locally generated power, the PSC can enable Wisconsin to become a national leader in renewable energy.

Statewide, uniform, renewable energy buyback programs are more equitable than other renewable energy policies that tend to favor larger, institutional projects that have sufficient tax liability to use federal tax benefits effectively. They help stabilize the marketplace for the development of renewable energy, reduce the volatility of future electricity prices, lower the long-term cost of electricity and reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

The use of buyback programs in other countries has led to significant expansion of renewable energy. Germany is a prime example of a world leader in renewables with 20,000 megawatts of wind energy and 55 percent of the world's solar energy production. Forty-five percent of Germany's wind turbines are locally owned thanks to buybacks. Some utilities in Wisconsin already offer buy-back programs, but these programs are not uniform across the state, are linked to voluntary green pricing programs of individual utilities instead of the entire rate base, provide sometimes inadequate rates and have limits on the type and eligible size of the generator and total capacity of the program.

Interest in buyback programs as a mechanism to increase distributed renewable energy in the United States is catching on. As of December 2008, three states have introduced legislation to enact such policies, including Michigan (Sponsor Kathleen Law introduced in 2007 HR 5218), Illinois (Sponsor Rep. Karen May; HB 5855) and Minnesota (Sponsors: Bly, Hilty, Knuth, Kalin, Peterson, A.; HR 3537). Representative Jay Inslee of Washington has also introduced legislation in Congress.

Thank you for your time and consideration into this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sue Beitlich, President