



November 18, 2011

**Comments on the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan**

**Legislative Interim Energy, Environment & Technology Committee**

**Co-Chair Sen. Curt McKenzie**

**Co-Chair Rep. George Eskridge**

Co-Chairmen McKenzie, Eskridge, and distinguished members of the Interim Energy, Environment & Technology Committee, thank you providing the Partnership for Science and Technology (PST) the opportunity to present our views related to the very important work you have ahead of you. We appreciate that the Committee chose to extend the public comment period to allow interested individuals and organizations adequate time to review the plan and develop their comments. The appropriate time for stakeholder input in any legislative decision making process is during the public comment period and it's extremely important that sufficient time is allotted for meaningful public input. That said, we do not believe any special interest group should be given special treatment or have an excessive amount of input during the official public comment period.

The Partnership for Science and Technology is an eastern Idaho based non-profit organization advocating for the advancement of science, energy and environmental initiatives that are in the public interest.

PST provided comments to the 2007 plan. We believe this plan is a significant improvement over that one, and we appreciate the hard work of the committee and the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance in drafting this document.

## Comments

- Overall, the plan is well written, comprehensive, and a fact-based document that will provide a good baseline for future discussions and decisions. We greatly appreciated the professionalism as to how the text was written, avoiding broad-based, exaggerative terminology and remaining factual and credible.
- The plan needs to be reviewed and updated at least every two years. A five year update is too long in today's energy world.
- Updating by committee, such as was the case for this report, is essential. It appeared the 2007 plan was produced by an outside consultant. This committee should consist of a well represented group of Idahoans led by professionals that are experts in their fields. We would hope that the committee consisted of individuals knowledgeable as to the true state of energy in our state and its true economic benefit. No special interest group uniquely represents the diversity of Idaho citizens' beliefs related to energy. As such, the committee structure should remain free from special interest representatives. Instead, an extensive public comment period (such as that employed in this process) should be the venue for citizens and special interest groups to provide their comments on the plan.
- It is completely appropriate that the plan provide for resource flexibility and encourage diversity, which is key to maintaining Idaho's low electricity rates and retaining a broad variety of resource options for utilities.
- The plan should not adopt specific targets or standards related to renewable energy options. Setting arbitrary targets could conflict with the goals of maintaining Idaho's low-cost energy supply.
- We support that the plan places high priority on the importance of transmission in providing reliable power.
- We support that the plan retains energy facility siting as a local issue, and recommends continuing the support of state agency resources through Energy Facility Site Advisory Teams.
- In contrast to the 2007 plan, nuclear energy has a significant section in this plan, both mentioning historic as well as future technology. We commend the committee for recognizing the value that it has in our state. The nuclear industry, related to business conducted both by the Idaho National

Laboratory and by other private industries, is a multi-billion dollar industry in this state. This cannot be ignored. We do believe that there are legitimate organizations that will explore the possibility of building a merchant plant in our state in the near future. To site a nuclear energy facility would advance our state from an energy importer to an energy exporter, plus nuclear power plants provide substantial economic benefits during their decades of operation. The jobs, taxes, and direct and secondary spending strengthen the economies of states with nuclear plants. We recommend keeping the entire language in the nuclear section as written and would even welcome a longer discussion on the economic benefit the nuclear energy industry has and could have in Idaho.

Thank you,

Lane Allgood

Executive Director