



**small business owners. small business values**

November 2, 2011

To: Members of the Interim Committee on Energy, Environment, and Technology

Re: 2012 Draft Idaho Energy Plan

To whom it may concern:

Clean energy is a priority for small businesses in Idaho. The Idaho Main Street Alliance represents over 400 small business owners throughout Idaho. The Alliance creates opportunities for small business owners to speak for ourselves, advancing public policies that are good for our businesses, our employees, and the communities we serve.

We were pleased to hear that the period for public comment and input was extended to November 4, 2011—transparency and accountability to the public is imperative. We respectfully submit the following comments on the Draft 2012 Idaho Energy Plan.

#### **Clean Energy Stimulates Local Economic Development**

Some groups that claim to represent the unified voice of the business community pit clean air against job creation. In their telling, we can have clean air or we can have jobs, but not both. In other words, jobs and a healthy economy can come only at the expense of healthy communities. Idaho Main Street Alliance small business owners recognize this as a false choice. Clean energy isn't a fiscal burden but an opportunity for local economic development.

Investing in clean energy stimulates innovation, economic growth, and job creation. A person wishing to insulate their home or business, install solar panels or make other energy efficient improvements will hire local workers to perform the work. This will benefit the workers, the employer and the consumer. The workers benefit through sustained employment, the employer benefits through a continuing customer base and income stream, and the consumer benefits through lower energy bills resulting in surplus funds to spend in their local economy.

The 2007 Energy Plan recommended updating the income tax code to encourage residential home upgrades. The 2012 Energy Plan should enforce this recommendation. The small business sector will see increased economic activity if Idaho residents have adequate incentives to invest in clean energy and efficiency.

### **Clean Energy Ensures Clean Air and Water**

Investing in clean energy will ensure clean air and water. Communities with access to clean air and water are more productive and contribute to a healthy small business sector.

Clean air improves health and productivity in the workplace. With fewer pollutants absenteeism is reduced and so are business health insurance costs.

Sincerely on behalf of members of the Idaho Main Street Alliance,

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