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SMITH/BUONO BILL TO ENCOURAGE RENEWABLE ENERGY PASSES **SENATE**

TRENTON - The Senate today approved legislation sponsored by Senators Bob Smith and Barbara Buono that would revise the laws concerning electricity production in New Jersey to encourage expanded use of renewable energy sources.

"This puts financial incentives in place that will encourage New Jersey's business community to install renewable energy systems," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset. "In order to make solar and wind power viable options for New Jersey's power needs, they can't be simply the environmentally correct choice, but also the economically prudent choice."

The bill, S-2936, would require the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to establish standards which would require electric power suppliers and basic generation service (BGS) providers to offer net metering at non-discriminatory rates to industrial and large commercial customers that generate electricity from certain renewable energy sources on the customer's side of the meter. Net-metering is the practice of purchasing the excess electricity produced by the renewable energy systems of residential and business customers. Under current law, power companies are required to offer net metering to only residential and small commercial customers who generate electricity using wind or solar photovoltaic systems.

"In order to reach the greenhouse gas reduction goals outlined in the "Global Warming Response Act," New Jersey needs to aggressively pursue renewable energy sources. Every kilowatt produced by clean technologies like solar cells and wind turbines is one fewer kilowatt that comes from the burning of fossil fuels. Renewable energy will play a critical role in our efforts to reverse the trends of global warming and restore balance to the global climate," explained Senator Buono.

Additionally, the substitute would provide that any customer-generators using Class I renewable energy generation systems that connect to the New Jersey electric public utilities' distribution system be eligible for renewable energy credits.

The bill passed by a vote of 34-0 and will now go to the Assembly for approval.