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SMITH-BATEMAN-GORDON BILL ESTABLISHING RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARDS CLEARS SENATE

TRENTON – Legislation sponsored by Senators Bob Smith, Kip Bateman and Bob Gordon that would make significant changes to existing law concerning Class 1 renewable energy portfolio standards to provide a statutory framework for greenhouse gas emission reduction was approved by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee today.

The bill, S-1707, sets ambitious targets aimed at achieving the goals of the Global Warming Response Act, enacted in July 2007 to adopt statewide limits on greenhouse gas emissions. Specifically, the law mandated the statewide reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, approximately a 20 percent reduction, followed by a further reduction of emissions to 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050. The bill aims to gradually increase the use of renewable energy resources to 80 percent by 2052 as one means to effectively reduce carbon emissions to meet the goals of the Global Warming Response Act.

“This bill will move New Jersey forward in creating a more sustainable future that reduces our reliance on carbon-based energy sources and enables us to reach our target of an 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050,” said Senate Environment and Energy Committee Chair Bob Smith (D-Middlesex, Somerset). “As a coastal state, New Jersey is particularly vulnerable to the rising sea level resulting from global warming and we must diversify our energy supply with renewable sources for power now in order to slow down the effects of global warming.”

The bill requires an increase in the percentage of electricity sold in New Jersey from Class I renewable energy to 11 percent beginning with Energy Year (EY) 2017, followed by an increase to 20 percent by EY 2022, and then increases in increments of 10 percent every five years thereafter until 80 percent of the electricity sold in the State is from Class I renewable energy by EY 2052. Class I renewable energy includes electricity derived from solar energy, wind energy, wave or tidal action, geothermal energy, landfill gas, anaerobic digestion, fuel cells using renewable fuels.

“New Jersey adopted one of the nation’s most aggressive renewable energy portfolio standards in 2011, making us a leader in clean energy nationwide and helping foster a significant solar energy industry in the state,” said Senator Bateman (R-Somerset, Hunterdon, Mercer). “Our legislation will help accelerate the implementation of Class I energy sources, which we should all embrace as a vital effort to make New Jersey a cleaner and greener place to be.”

“We can no longer wait to develop strategies on greenhouse gas reduction. Global warming is real, and it is happening now even as some choose denial and continue to debate the issue,” said Senator Gordon (D-Bergen, Passaic). “Putting New Jersey on a path that will reduce greenhouse gases and protect our environment through increased use of renewable energy sources must start now.”

The bill was approved by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee with a vote of 3-0. It now heads to the Senate for consideration.