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SMITH-GORDON BILL ESTABLISHING RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARDS CLEARS SENATE

TRENTON – Legislation sponsored by Senators Bob Smith 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 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.

“We must think about our future and act now to create a more sustainable environment for generations to come. As a coastal state, New Jersey is especially susceptible to rising sea levels resulting from global warming. It is critical to reduce our dependence on carbon-based energy sources,” said Senate Environment and Energy Committee Chair Bob Smith (D-Middlesex, Somerset). “This bill will move New Jersey forward in reaching the targeted 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050 by diversifying our energy supply with renewable sources for power.”

“Global warming is not a theory, and the time has come to develop and implement strategies on greenhouse gas reduction in order to preserve New Jersey’s environment for future generations,” said Senator Gordon (D-Bergen, Passaic). “We all serve as guardians of our environment, and must encourage and increase our reliance on clean, renewable energy sources. This will have a positive impact on our sustainability going forward.”

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.

The bill was approved by the Senate with a vote of 24-15. It now heads to the Assembly for consideration.