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Written Comments for Submission in the House Ways and Means Committee Hearing on
Certain Expiring Tax Provisions

I have been an energy attorney for over 25 years and have worked extensively in the renewable sector over the last 10 years. I am writing to encourage the Committee to extend the wind energy production tax credit (PTC) prior to year's end. The impending expiration of the PTC at year end is already having a profound effect on jobs in the wind sector. If not extended until year's end most economic activity in the wind sector in the second half of 2012 and all of 2013 will grind to a halt. Given our current economic climate we can ill afford to lose the jobs and economic stimulus associated with this renewable energy sector.

There are growing calls to avoid additional subsidies for renewable energy. I agree with those calls. If the renewable energy sector is to mature and compete financially with other forms of energy and avoid the boom bust cycle associated with the rise and fall of the PTCs it must figure out a more sustainable policy approach. To that end congress should examine and enact policies which will over the long haul allow renewable energy to compete—financially—with other forms of energy including coal and natural gas. Such polices should include a close examination and elimination of subsidies for other types of energy including coal, natural gas and nuclear. The environmental benefits of renewable energy are obvious but need not come at an expense where such benefits are uneconomic compared to conventional energy. A policy leveling the playing field will ultimately allow renewable energy to compete financially. The new policy initiative should also include a significant increase in R&D spending for all forms of renewable energy. Increased R&D dollars will ultimately drive technology costs lower again improving renewable energy's ability to compete financially.

The problem of course is that it will take some time to examine, adopt and implement a more sustainable renewable energy policy in this country. To simply adopt the new policies while allowing the expiration of the PTC will devastate the wind industry (and other renewable technologies) and may significantly push off the time when renewable energy can compete financially. To that end I would encourage the committee to pass a four to five year extension of the PTC with a very clear message that it will sunset at the end of that time. Mean while if congress can adopt the new more sustainable polices over the next twelve months that will allow the industry to properly prepare for the sunset. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.