

# U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in a global perspective

BY BILL VERNER, VICE PRESIDENT, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, GEORGIA EMC

Congress reconvenes this month with climate and renewable energy legislation left as unfinished business for its 111th session. Throughout the debate, electric cooperatives have urged Congress to make sure any such legislation is fair, affordable and achievable. The stakes could not be higher as policymakers attempt to balance our nation's economic well-being with the long-term environmental health of our planet.

It doesn't help matters when respected journalists distort vital information in the complex debate over global warming.

One such example is *New York Times* nationally syndicated columnist Thomas Friedman who, in his July 24, 2010, op-ed "We're Gonna Be Sorry," expresses his dismay at Senate Republicans and Democrats, business leaders and the general public for our collective responsibility in the Senate's failure to advance legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs or CO<sub>2</sub>) and promote renewable energy. Adding to his frustration, Friedman writes:

*Just as the U.S. Senate was abandoning plans for a U.S. cap-and-trade system, this article ran in The China Daily: "BEIJING—The country is set to begin domestic carbon trading programs during its 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015) to help it meet its 2020 carbon intensity target. The decision was made at a closed-door meeting chaired by Xie Zhenhua, deputy director of the National Development and Reform Commission. ... Putting a price on carbon is a crucial step for the country to employ the market to reduce its carbon emissions and genuinely shift to a low-carbon economy, industry analysts said."*

Decreasing our dependence on foreign oil, promoting domestic energy development and reducing GHGs

in a responsible manner are all things most Americans agree upon. However, Friedman's misleading efforts that hold up China as a world leader for the United States to follow in energy and environmental stewardship are irresponsible. For starters, *The China Daily*, like all media in China, is government-owned. Here are just two examples of widely known news prior to Friedman's use of *The China Daily* report, that begin to tell the rest of the story about China:

**PARIS, July 19, 2010, (UPI)—***China officially became the world's most voracious energy-consumer last year, the International Energy Agency in Paris said Monday. China's energy consumption in 2009, the equivalent of burning 2.3 billion tons of oil, outpaced the United States by 4 percent, The Wall Street Journal reported. That put the United States in second place in energy consumption for the first time in more than 100 years. "The fact that China overtook the U.S. as the world's largest energy consumer symbolizes the start of a new age in the history of energy," said IEA chief economist Fatih Birol. The United States maintains its ranking as the top energy consumer per capita, where it out-consumes China five to one.*

**China's energy demand—Ecoworld, by Gordon Feller, March 31, 2010—***Only in the past year have economists generally acknowledged that China has now replaced the USA as the world's greatest producer of industrial CO<sub>2</sub>. Is this just the beginning? According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, China relies on coal for 70 percent of its energy needs. EIA projections indicate that consumption of coal in China will nearly double in the next 20 years, and that if anything, the percentage of energy usage*

*represented by coal in China is going to increase. Activists who want to shut down American industry need to remember two things: Over 90 percent of the fuel consumed in the world requires combustion, and the Chinese (and many other nations) are not going to shut down their industries just because we want them to.*

The U.S. Department of Energy's Information Administration (EIA) reports the following in its December 2009 Emissions of Greenhouse Gases Report #DOE/EIA-0573(2008), accessible online at [bit.ly/cEMpWx](http://bit.ly/cEMpWx):

## **U.S. emissions in a global perspective—**

- U.S. energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are projected to increase by an average of 0.2 percent per year from 2006 to 2030. ... Consequently, the U.S. share of world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is projected to fall to 15.4 percent in 2030.
- China's share of global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is projected to grow from 21 percent in 2006 to 29 percent in 2030, and China accounts for 51 percent of the projected increase in world emissions over the period. India accounts for the second-largest share of the projected increase, 7 percent. ☺

**As the term "Global Climate Change" implies, U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions do not simply stop at our border, nor do the emissions of other countries around the planet stop at theirs.** American consumers deserve to know all the facts on global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as this debate progresses.

Electric cooperatives will continue to urge Congress to make sure any climate-change or energy legislation is fair, affordable and achievable, and we will continue to provide factual information to our consumers for this debate. To make sure your voice is heard, go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop).

## Proposed congressional actions or inactions could hike electric bills

BY GARY MILLER, PRESIDENT/CEO GREYSTONE POWER CORP.

While Douglasville-based GreyStone Power Corp. members and consumers nationwide breathed a sigh of relief this summer with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's decision to delay consideration of climate and energy legislation until fall, the need for assurances from Congress that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) won't be allowed to bypass our elected representatives on the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) is more critical than ever.

In a show of true bipartisanship, all but three (Reps. Hank Johnson, John Lewis and David Scott) of Georgia's 13 congressmen and both of the state's U.S. senators have stepped up to the plate and assumed responsibility for Congress' role in ensuring that climate-change legislation would NOT lead to exorbitantly higher bills for all Americans. Despite numerous requests from GreyStone Power and its members, as well as Tucker-based Georgia Electric Membership Corp., the trade association for Georgia's 42 electric cooperatives, Scott and Lewis, whose congressional districts cover portions of GreyStone's west metro Atlanta service territory, have refused to add their names to a House resolution that will keep the EPA from regulating GHGs for two years, at least until Congress has a chance to properly study and debate the complex issues involved. Scott, Lewis and Johnson do not appear concerned that the EPA's current path for GHG regulation presumes the consumer is willing to pay for such regulation "at potentially any cost."

The Clean Air Act, which is what the EPA is now proceeding to regulate GHGs under, was never written with GHGs in mind. It was put into place to regulate specified airborne pollutants, which is currently being done at great expense. Tucker-based Oglethorpe Power Corp., owned by GreyStone and 38 other Georgia electric cooperatives, recently spent \$1.2 billion on pollution-control improvements at its Georgia co-owned coal plants to bring them in line with the Clean Air Act.

We want both Scott and Lewis to not delegate the economic interests of their constituents entirely to EPA on this subject, especially while many of our members in this down economy are struggling to pay their electric bills. To do otherwise would be to allow legislation by regulation. It is Congress' job to write law and for agencies to implement those laws. By co-sponsoring legislation to delay EPA regulation of GHGs until Congress establishes fair, affordable and achievable standards, Scott, Lewis and Johnson can demonstrate that they join the rest of Georgia's delegation who believe impacts on the consumer must be addressed.

Both the Senate and House leadership, along with President Barack Obama, remain steadfast in their rush to pass energy and climate legislation in 2010, at potentially devastating expense to the economy and consumers nationwide. Several bills are pending in the U.S. Congress, some addressing climate with various "cap-and-trade" or carbon tax initiatives, while others address renewable energy mandates and energy-efficiency

incentives. We at GreyStone Power, and electric cooperatives across the country, do NOT oppose climate-change legislation to reduce GHGs, provided such legislation is fair, affordable and achievable. We also support practical incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy development, but we oppose renewable energy and efficiency mandates that could impose unnecessary hardships on our consumers.

America's 900-plus electric cooperatives are willing to assist Congress in developing and passing a simple, affordable, flexible and effective piece of legislation to address the nation's energy and climate-change objectives. We are not opposed to the common-sense regulation of GHGs, but we are against the regulation of GHGs at *any* cost.

Maintaining the affordability of electricity is the basis on which electric cooperatives, other utilities and their consumers will judge all climate-change and energy legislation. Putting a price on carbon emissions may cause electricity prices to rise beyond the reach of many Americans. This is likely to happen if Congress passes the wrong bill, or if the EPA is allowed to regulate carbon emissions under the Clean Air Act. Longtime Congressman John Dingell (D-MI) warned that EPA carbon regulation would be a "glorious mess." I certainly agree. ☺

*Gary Miller is president/CEO of Douglasville-based GreyStone Power Corp., an electric cooperative serving more than 103,000 members in portions of eight counties in west metro Atlanta.*

# Create an energy policy that is fair, affordable and achievable

BY BILL VERNER, VICE PRESIDENT, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, GEORGIA ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORP.

## New Year's resolutions for the 112th Congress

- Stop the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), and let Congress establish policy first.
- Develop a renewable-energy policy that allows regional flexibility and provides proper cost allocation for any new transmission capacity required for renewable energy delivery.
- Develop an energy-efficiency policy that recognizes existing investments and achievements with incentives for new technology, conservation and efficiency gains.
- Maintain a strong Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for financing and infrastructure needs, restoring lending authority for base-load generation.

In the Peach State, 42 electric membership corporations (EMCs) serve roughly 4.5 million Georgians across 73 percent of our state's land area. There is an average of fewer than 10 consumers per mile of line, 90 percent of which are residential. But it is important to understand that EMCs here are part of an extensive network of electric co-ops nationwide that work together on public policy on behalf of our member-owners. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) is the service organization representing nearly 900 not-for-profit, member-owned, rural electric cooperative systems, which serve 42 million consumers in 47 states.

NRECA estimates that cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles or 42 percent of the nation's electric distribution lines covering three-quarters of the nation's landmass. Cooperatives serve approximately 18 million businesses, homes, farms, schools and other establishments in 2,500 of the nation's 3,141 counties. Nationally, cooperatives still average just seven consumers per mile of electrical distribution line, by far the lowest density in the industry. The challenge of traversing vast, remote stretches of often rugged topography, and the increasing volatility in the electric marketplace pose a daily challenge to our mission: to provide

a stable, reliable supply of affordable power to our members. That challenge is critical, considering the average household income in the service territories of most co-ops lags behind the national average by more than 14 percent.

Bringing electricity to America's countryside has never been easy, but now electric cooperatives must deal with being part of an industry in transition. The electric utility industry faces a carbon-constrained environment at a time when the future electric generation needs of electric co-ops are nearly twice that of the rest of the industry. A United States Department of Agriculture study, conducted as a requirement of the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007, found that "due to current and projected growth, cooperatives will need to double generation capacity by 2020."

A silver lining of sorts in the economic downturn has stretched the timetable for increased demand by five years or more in many states. Regardless, it's clear we need new generation, and it needs to be as clean as practicable while we are also dealing with compliance for multiple new environmental regulatory hurdles, from the Clean Air Act to the Clean Water Act, for existing coal generation. Meanwhile, electric cooperatives must operate under the ominous cloud of

the Massachusetts versus EPA decision, which afforded EPA the ability to regulate carbon under the Clean Air Act. Whether from Congress, the bureaucracy or the courts, electric co-ops have to find a way to produce more electricity under more difficult conditions.

The good news is that electric cooperatives are industry leaders in energy efficiency and demand-side management, which helps to mitigate the need for new generation as much as possible, and have worked for years on clean coal technologies. Here in Georgia, Oglethorpe Power Corp. is participating in the first nuclear plant built in this country in 30 years. In short, rural electric cooperatives must build more base-load generation, deal with severe restrictions on current base-load generation and ensure new generation is as clean as possible. Meanwhile, our No. 1 objective is to keep electric service reliable and bills affordable.

Georgia's congressional delegation showed bipartisan support for EMC consumers in the 111th Congress with three Democrats joining all seven Republican House members and both U.S. senators in opposing cap and trade, mandated renewable energy standards and by supporting legislation to stop the EPA from regulating CO<sub>2</sub> until Congress takes action. We look forward to working with Georgia's delegation in the 112th Congress—including new members Rob Woodall (R-7th) and Austin Scott (R-8th)—to ensure that the delivery of energy to EMC consumers remains fair, affordable and achievable.

To learn more and engage your elected representatives, join NRECA's Our Energy, Our Future initiative at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), and make your voice heard along with more than 535,000 Americans who have expressed their views to members of Congress. 🌱

# Progress report on 112th Congress: Although it's too early to tell, so far, so good . . .

January's Special Energy Report listed four New Year's resolutions for the 112th Congress as it pertains to energy. While it's far too early, signals coming from the new leadership should be very encouraging news for consumers amid our distressed economy. U.S. Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), new chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, released a background paper on key issues before the committee on Jan. 18. The following section on energy is excerpted from that paper:

## U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee Background Paper on Key Issues Excerpt from Energy and Power Agenda

**EPA regulatory chokehold:** We believe it critical that the Obama Administration "stop" imposing the new global warming regulatory regime, which will undermine economic growth and U.S. competitiveness for no significant environmental benefits. For EPA's other multi-billion dollar Clean Air Act rules, we believe the agency has been regulating "too much too fast," without fully analyzing the feasibility and economic and job impacts of the new rules. Congress will be reasserting its oversight function to ensure sufficient analysis supports the proposed new rules, that the rulemaking process allows for open and full evaluation and information, and that the Administration is fully considering jobs and economic impacts in its decision-making. This oversight effort should be a deliberate, thoughtful, and probing process so that the Committee is satisfied that the agency has done its job. The stakes could not be higher; if the Obama Administration succeeds in imposing unaffordable and unworkable permitting and other rules through EPA, it will severely impede the domestic manufacturing and industrial growth necessary for this nation to create jobs and emerge strongly from a devastating recession.

**Renewable electricity mandates:** Although governments have important roles to play in facilitating development of alternative energy, we oppose energy technology mandates that must be met regardless of cost. We will be exploring the electricity cost and reliability implications associated with federal government mandates for increased renewable electricity.

Consumers should applaud the committee's leadership for opposing energy technology mandates that must be met regardless of cost. Critics will say such a stance is "anti-environment." The truth is proposed renewable energy and efficiency mandates and "cap-and-trade" legislation, all which failed to pass in the last session of Congress, were akin to the adage of *Ready ... Shoot ... Aim*. Most people like to know how much something is going to cost—and what they are getting—before making a purchase. For instance, EMCs' ongoing investment in new environmental controls at two major generation facilities is a perfect illustration.

EMC consumers in Georgia may not be aware that they are in the process of paying for roughly \$1 billion in new environmental controls in Oglethorpe Power Corp.'s share of ownership for EMCs at two of Georgia's coal-fired power plants, Scherer in Monroe County and Wansley in Heard County. These new controls are required to maintain compliance with the Clean Air Act, and utilize existing technology to control known pollutants (SO<sub>2</sub>, NO, Hg and particulates) with identifiable and measurable results. This investment and the corresponding controls will be complete in 2014.

Oglethorpe Power's new pollution controls at Scherer and Wansley are a classic example of *Ready ... Aim ... Shoot*.

Understand the objective. Consider alternatives. Know what you're getting. Make the investment. We think most consumers would prefer their electric cooperative be managed this way, and that's why we applaud the House Energy and Commerce Committee's leadership in opposing energy technology mandates regardless of cost.

Wind, solar, energy efficiency and other forms of renewable energy must all play a role in our nation's overall energy portfolio, but consumers deserve the full picture of winners and losers in this energy debate. Consumers should know, for example, that special interest groups that lobby for expanding wind or solar power include equipment manufacturers and interests positioned to make profits as a result of the required subsidy for these energy sources. Wind and solar lobbyists fight incentives for energy efficiency and fight against each other for incentives. Federal spending constraints and failure to achieve energy mandates in last year's Congress make the special interests' battle all the more fierce this year. Georgia EMC will continue to represent the interest of our consumers, doing our best to help Congress approach energy policy with a *Ready ... Aim ... Shoot* mindset.

I am encouraged to see the opportunity for a candid discussion on common-sense, environmentally and fiscally responsible energy policy in the 112th Congress, and EMC consumers should be too.

To learn more and engage your elected representatives, join NRECA's Our Energy, Our Future Initiative at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), and make your voice heard along with the more than 535,000 Americans who have expressed their views to members of Congress. ☺

# Energy solutions in pursuit of a problem

*President Barack Obama recently followed up on his State of the Union call for 80 percent of our nation's energy to come from "clean energy sources" by 2035 with a much-publicized speech on his proposal for a national energy policy. While the president's proposal is short on specifics of how an 80-percent threshold is achieved by 2035, Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) recently sought public comment on various components of a so-called Clean Energy Standard (CES). Georgia's electric co-ops will support energy policies that are fair, affordable and achievable. The devil is, however, in the details, as illustrated in the column below, reprinted with permission from the Georgia Public Policy Foundation.*

Georgians are nervously watching petroleum prices climb amid ongoing unrest in oil-producer Libya. Under the Gold Dome, legislators were again subjected to the perennial push for home-grown alternatives to fossil fuels. And this session, German experts took a new tack at the Capitol with a promising presentation on renewable sources of energy and their economic benefits. The temptation is great, but legislators must focus on a commonsense policy that promotes cost-effective, clean energy.

Germany has made remarkable inroads into renewable energy generation. Renewables have grown from 4 percent to about 10 percent of Germany's energy portfolio over the past decade, German scientist Christine Woerlen told legislators. Not the least of the benefits, according to Woerlen, is German economic development: 350,000 jobs are now in "green" energy, about half as many as in Germany's auto industry. One in three electrical engineers is involved in renewable energy.

Renewables have also helped Germany, whose only domestic fossil fuel source is lignite, reduce its en-

ergy dependence and its greenhouse gas emissions, Woerlen added. But it comes at a price: Energy prices have increased over the past 10 years. In fact, a 2010 study found Germany's average energy rates (about 32 cents U.S. per kilowatt-hour) and energy taxes (41 percent) to be the second highest in the European Union, behind Denmark. Georgia's rates averaged 9 cents per kWh.

"[Germany's] utilities are increasing their prices; we don't know why," Woerlen told legislators.

Here's a possible explanation: Renewable energy sources, especially wind and solar, are unreliable, inconsistent and often unavailable when customers might require the energy. This fact causes the greatest underestimation of the true cost of renewable energy. While German utilities must buy the electricity that "green energy entrepreneurs" produce at a government-set price, the utilities must also maintain operating levels as though renewable energy sources are not on the grid in order to provide a consistent, reliable source of electricity for industry, hospitals and homeowners when necessary. If fewer customers routinely buy utility-generated energy, utilities must increase prices to the remainder to cover generation costs.

Georgia, which incidentally provides biomass pellets to Germany for energy generation, is lagging the nation in job recovery. But electric power should invite jobs to Georgia, not be the *source* of jobs, especially not at German energy prices. Diversity in energy is important to competition and reliability, and advancements in solar and other renewables in Georgia are occurring. But they must move forward within the competitive constraints of the free market, not through artificial subsidies.

Energy generation in the United States is the cleanest it has ever been. Energy productivity is the highest ever: Americans are producing so much more per capita with less en-

ergy output. The search for clean, efficient and cost-effective energy sources should be encouraged, but not by mandate. "Renewable" energy—solar, wind, biomass and hydropower—is not necessarily clean energy. There is no global energy shortage; that is evident in the new sources of fossil fuels being discovered almost daily.

If the challenge is emissions, science-based regulatory measures can limit pollution without limiting options. Technology continues to make energy utilization cleaner than ever, from power plants to auto engines to home appliances. If the issue is clean and reliable energy, nuclear energy provides the best option, and Georgia is already leading the pack in the race for the next generation of nuclear facilities. If the issue is global instability, legislators must apply pressure on the administration and Congress to streamline the process to allow safe and responsible exploration of America's own energy resources, from vast offshore reserves to federal lands. If the issue is efficiency, encourage research into more energy-efficient options.

There is always more that can be done to produce cleaner energy. Given the opportunity, America's spirit of innovation has produced more for its citizens' advancement and quality of life than government ever has. Germany's admirable but expensive venture into renewable energy is by government mandate. Americans, on the other hand, pride themselves on their freedom of choice—and their ability to choose wisely. 🍷

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*Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before the U.S. Congress or the Georgia Legislature.*

# Co-ops urge Congress to support vital RUS loan program

While the energy policy debate appears to be on the back burner, a major concern for electric co-ops involves maintaining a vital source of capital through the Rural Utilities Service (RUS). Georgia's co-op leaders acknowledge and support efforts in the 112th Congress to exercise fiscal restraint to deal with our nation's deficit and debt crisis, but we urge our elected representatives to ensure that all types of utilities (co-ops, municipal and investor-owned) are treated equitably in any comprehensive budget reform.

For 75 years, the nation's 900-plus, member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives have worked hard to improve the rural quality of life. Today, electric co-ops generate, transmit and distribute electricity to 18 million homes, businesses, industries, retail centers, schools, churches, farms, airports and irrigation systems in 47 states, serving 42 million total consumers.

To date, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), electric co-ops have invested more than \$140 billion to construct critical facilities spanning 75 percent of the United States, including 66,000 miles of bulk transmission lines and 2.5 million miles of distribution lines—42 percent of the nation's total. Co-ops also generate roughly 5 percent of all electricity produced domestically, provide 10 percent of all kilowatt-hours sold, employ more than 70,000, and pay more than \$1.4 billion annually in state and local taxes. The federal government's RUS loan program has been essential to building this infrastructure.

"Federal assistance for electric utilities is not unique," NRECA CEO Glenn English stresses. "For-profit, investor-owned utilities [IOUs] receive tax breaks, while city-owned municipi-

pal electric systems are able to issue tax-exempt bonds."

According to the Congressional Research Service and NRECA, a comparison of electric utilities shows:

- Consumer-owned electric co-ops serve an average of 7 consumers per mile of line and receive annual revenues of \$10,565 per mile of line. Based on current interest rates, RUS loans actually make money for the U.S. Treasury—approximately \$63 million over the past two years and more than \$100 million in 2012.

***'In short, RUS electric loans do not cost taxpayers a single penny [which means the annual cost per consumer for this vital program is \$0.00].'***

—Glenn English, CEO, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

- Stockholder-owned IOUs average 35 customers per mile of line and collect \$62,665 in revenue per mile of line. Most IOUs include presumed federal tax liabilities in electric rates. However, tax breaks available since 1987 (investment tax credits and accelerated depreciation) allow IOUs to retain and defer most of the taxes collected, a total of roughly \$94 billion to date—essentially an "interest-free loan." At a cost to the government of \$3.8 billion in 2009 (the last year available), this federal subsidy for IOUs works out to about \$38 per customer.

- Publicly owned municipal electric systems average 47 consumers per mile of line and reap \$86,302 in revenue per mile of line. The federal government loses revenue when municipals issue tax-exempt bonds be-

cause interest paid to bond owners is not taxed. The cost of this subsidy in 2003 (the last year available) was \$909 million, or \$55 per consumer.

"In short, RUS electric loans do not cost taxpayers a single penny," English comments. "Coupled with strong and innovative management and local governance, electric cooperatives have used RUS financing to keep electric rates affordable—an important consideration since household incomes in co-op service territories are 14 percent lower than the national average."

With electric co-ops anticipating \$66.1 billion in capital needs over the next five years and \$140.8 billion over the next decade to update aging infrastructure, connect new consumers, and build needed power plants, gutting a time-tested loan program that doesn't cost the government any money simply makes no sense, English says.

"Unfortunately, due to decisions made by the White House Office of Management and Budget in 2007, RUS is currently prevented from making loans for coal, natural gas, or nuclear baseload generation. The Obama administration has sought to extend RUS lending restrictions to intermediate and peaking natural gas-fired generation and power plant environmental upgrades as well. Taken together, these moves would limit RUS electric loans to only renewable energy systems, transmission, distribution, and carbon capture projects at existing coal- and natural gas-burning power plants. Yet federal subsidies for all types of generation continue to flow to IOUs and municipal utilities," he says.

To learn how you can make your voice heard on energy policy decisions before Congress, go to [www.OurEnergy.coop](http://www.OurEnergy.coop).

# T.R.A.I.N. Act on the right track

In September, electric co-op employees, directors and consumers joined thousands of concerned citizens and small-business owners across the country advocating support of the T.R.A.I.N. Act (HR 2401) to members of Congress.

So why were Georgians fired up about the T.R.A.I.N. Act, and what does it do?

HR 2401, or the “Transparency in Regulatory Analysis of Impacts on the Nation Act of 2011” requires the federal government to do something that most citizens would be shocked to learn is not already in place. HR 2401 requires a comprehensive, cost-benefit analysis prior to the implementation of new regulatory proposals by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Just like any reasonable small-business owner in Georgia would do if contemplating major changes in company operations, the T.R.A.I.N. Act requires the government to consider the broad implications of new EPA regulations on the consumer, businesses, jobs and the overall economy in addition to environmental protection measures alone.

Under this act, a federal inter-agency committee would collect and report information such as the number of jobs that could be affected, the potential increase in consumers’ power bills, the financial impact to small businesses and the resulting effect on the United States’ global competitiveness.

Thanks in part to a nationwide grassroots movement, reason pre-

vailed on Sept. 23, and the T.R.A.I.N. Act passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 249 to 169. Ten members of the Georgia congressional delegation should be applauded for taking a reasonable, consumer and “jobs”-minded position with a “yes” vote on HR 2401.

**Reps. John Barrow, Sanford Bishop, Paul Broun, Phil Gingrey, Tom Graves, Tom Price, Jack Kingston, Austin Scott, Lyn Westmoreland and Rob Woodall all supported the T.R.A.I.N. Act, and deserve a big thank-you from co-op employees, directors and members for their “yes” vote.**

*Unfortunately, with a “no” vote, Reps. Hank Johnson, John Lewis and David Scott apparently remain unconvinced that the EPA’s massive regulatory overreach will ultimately drive consumer and business electricity bills straight up, and the nation’s global competitiveness straight down.*

So, now what? Although both Georgia Sens. Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson support a similar measure in the U.S. Senate, there is unfortunately not enough support in the leadership of the U.S. Senate to even bring the T.R.A.I.N. Act up for debate, or any other reasonable legislation to rein in the EPA. Even if a similar measure did gain passage in the Senate, President Barack Obama has stated he would veto the bill. Clearly, the president is attempting to make the use of our nation’s most abundant domestic fuel source—

coal, which provides 50 percent of our nation’s electricity—cost-prohibitive through additional EPA regulations, achieving the “cap and trade” equivalent of the measure that failed in the 111th Congress.

But the House’s passage of HR 2401 and the grassroots efforts of electric cooperatives and our consumers, concerned citizens and community leaders in support of the bill were not in vain. The passage of the T.R.A.I.N. Act sends a loud and clear message to the Senate, the EPA and the president that it is only reasonable to require the government to consider the impact on consumers and the overall economy before implementing sweeping regulatory changes—especially when our economy is already reeling from regulatory uncertainty.

Georgia’s electric cooperatives applaud the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives on this topic of critical importance, and we will continue to raise awareness of the dire consequences for our consumers and the nation’s economy if our nation’s leaders fail to curb what has become known as EPA’s “train wreck” of proposed regulations.

Stay tuned to *GEORGIA Magazine* for more insight on how the EPA’s proposals will affect you and our economic well-being as we provide more important information about:

- Significant emission reductions achieved at co-op-owned generation plants to comply with existing Clean Air Act regulations;
- Costs of environmental regulation compliance to date, which is yielding significant emission reductions;
- Costs of proposed environmental regulations and the corresponding projected marginal yields in emission reductions; and
- What consumers can do to make their voices heard!

*Go to Our Energy, Our Future, [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), to learn more and to send your message to Congress, urging them to help us maintain affordable and reliable electricity for Georgians!* 🍌