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### **\*\*\* Inherency**

#### **RPS Policies used throughout the world**

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This policy is not unique to the United States, as it is employed by a number of national governments as well as subnational entities that range from the state of South Australia to the province of Prince Edward Island. But they have proliferated among the American states at a rapid rate, having been adopted by 22 states and the District of Columbia as of mid 2006, with a strong likelihood of continued expansion in coming years. Well over half of the American public now lives in a state in which an RPS is in operation and at least one state has such a policy in every region of the nation except the Southeast.

#### **RPS involves an incremental expansion of existing regulatory policies**

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The employment of portfolio standards to promote expanded use of renewable energy is neither a new concept nor one that is exclusively American. It represents a blending of policy strategies with a combination of regulation and deference to market preferences that is a hallmark of more recent innovations in American environmental and energy policy (Mazmanian and Kraft 2000). For most states, establishing an RPS merely involves an incremental expansion of existing regulatory powers over electricity generation and distribution within their boundaries. Alongside their historic and pivotal roles in overseeing the regulation of electric utilities, market restructuring, approval and siting of new generating facilities, and electricity rate-setting and taxation, states have for decades sought ways to promote renewable energy sources as well as energy conservation (Teske 2004; Gormley 1983; Smeloff and Asmus 1997). Consequently, many state officials view portfolio standards as simply one additional mechanism to respond to public demand for an electricity supply that is as reliable, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly as possible.

## **Future Federal action unclear on RPS**

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It remains unclear whether the federal government might at some point draw larger lessons from the states and develop a nation-wide version of an RPS that thoughtfully and systematically builds on the best practices of state experience. At present, the American experience resembles that of other federated systems of government, such as the European Union and Australia. In all of these cases, RPSs continue to proliferate and mature, with the possibility of eventual incorporation into a policy that applies across jurisdictions. For now, states have moved to the cutting edge of this issue both domestically and internationally, having evolved in recent years from modest experimentation to the assumption of central roles in this area of climate policy development.

## **RPS policies combine mandates and credits to be sold**

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Individual state RPSs differ from one another in detail but have many similar design features. All RPSs enacted to date establish some specification of a percentage or absolute amount of electricity generation or capacity that designated suppliers in a state are required to provide by a particular date. Each state program defines what constitutes a qualifying renewable electricity source (Table 2) and, over time, increases the percentage or amount of capacity or generation that must be provided from renewable sources to meet the standard. Most states also allow regulated parties to generate their own renewable supply or purchase credits from other suppliers. The so-called “renewable energy credit” (REC) system follows other market-based mechanisms that allow options for assuring compliance, enabling suppliers to meet regulatory requirements in the most inexpensive way feasible. In turn, each state RPS designates a lead governmental agency, most commonly the state public utility commission, to oversee most aspects of implementation.

## **States need a consistent renewable energy policy**

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Fourth, as the United States moves toward a *de facto* national RPS through a tapestry of state-based programs, it is important to find ways that the federal government can play a constructive and supportive role. President George W. Bush signed the Texas RPS into law in 1999 and two former cabinet-rank officers took similar steps when they served as governors of their respective states (New Jersey and Wisconsin). That statehouse experience has not, however, necessarily translated into constructive federal engagement and support for continued state experimentation with RPSs. Indeed, it is difficult to understate the antipathy individuals responsible for different areas of RPS development and implementation at the state level express over their dealings with the federal government. This cuts across partisan and regional lines and reflects a deep state-based desire that, in the words of one official, “the feds not come in and mess up all the good stuff we’ve been trying to do.” Repeated fluctuation in the federal production tax credit for renewable energy has fostered a boom-and-bust cycle for renewable development in a number of states, leaving significant lags in the development of renewables during those periods in which the credit has been terminated or its status has remained uncertain. Officials in Texas and other states with large renewable targets contend that this fluctuation has been the single biggest impediment to even further expansion of renewable capacity. In this instance, most state officials welcome the recent extension of the credit in the 2005 Energy Act as one of the more constructive federal actions in many years.

## **Congressional action needed to realize substantial renewable portfolio energy gains**

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While many states are making important strides in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with renewable standards, substantially greater benefits could be achieved if Congress adopted a national standard. A July 2004 UCS analysis examined the costs and benefits of a 20 percent by 2020 renewable standard, and found that America would increase its total renewable power to 180,000 MW in 2020—nearly 11 times more than current levels.[3]

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## US has responsibility and interest to reduce CO2 through RPS

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With only five percent of the world population, the United States produces nearly 25 percent of annual global heat-trapping emissions.[4] Electricity generation accounts for fully one-third of these emissions.[5] We have a responsibility and a compelling interest to significantly reduce these harmful emissions. Renewable electricity standards offer a smart, affordable climate solution with a proven track record.

## Interstate collaboration would work with RPS programs

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Interstate collaboration could also take other forms, allowing neighboring RPS states to trade RECs and encourage integration between RPS implementation and other state policies designed to reduce greenhouse gases. One could also envision common efforts to build respective renewable sources through both informal and formal agreements between states. In recent years, multiple states have demonstrated new ways to work toward common cause in areas ranging from tax policy to vehicle registration to regional attainment of ozone standards, all with the intent of benefiting all participating states (Greenblatt 2005; Engel 2005; Zimmerman 2004). Renewable energy—and RPSs—may offer similar opportunities for states, much as other states are beginning to join common cause on other climate initiatives. In the case of cap-and-trade programs, for example, New York and seven other eastern states have concluded that it makes more sense to work together than separately, leading to the evolution of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (De Palma 2005). More broadly, states might also expand opportunities to work with other neighbors, such as Canadian provinces, in instances where considerable energy is already shared and similar policies are emerging between respective states and provinces.

## 20 Percent National Standard would cut CO2 emissions in half

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The 20 percent national standard would reduce the projected growth in power plant CO2 emissions under a business-as-usual scenario by more than half, or 434 MMT per year by 2020. This level of reductions is equivalent to taking nearly 65 million cars off the road or planting 104 million acres of trees—an area approximately the size of Oregon and Washington State combined. Even a 10 percent standard would deliver substantial climate benefits, reducing annual CO2 emissions by 166 MMT by 2020. Studies by the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration have shown similar results.

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This commitment to increasing renewable energy at the state level will have a significant impact on reducing CO2 emissions. By 2017, state standards will reduce total annual CO2 emissions by nearly 75 million metric tons (MMT)—the equivalent of taking 11.1 million cars off the road or planting 17.9 million acres of trees. The standards in California, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas alone account for 70 percent of the projected reductions.

RPS have worked successfully in the past

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Practical solutions do exist. For example, 40 percent of U.S. states have adopted a renewable electricity standard—a policy that requires electricity suppliers to gradually increase their use of renewable energy such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass. These states are demonstrating that renewable standards are an affordable solution to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and other unhealthy air emissions, while alleviating the harmful impact that fossil fuel extraction, transport, and use have on land and water resources.

\*\*\* A2: Politics Disadvantage

## **RPS Policies enjoy broad bipartisan support**

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Many areas of state energy policy are enormously contentious, particularly those that propose significant changes in practice for privately held utilities that have traditionally dominated service delivery in a jurisdiction. These controversies have been evident in recent years in the battles in numerous state capitals over proposed restructuring (or deregulation) of electricity wholesale and retail rates (Brown 2001). Renewable portfolio standards indeed call for significant changes from past practice, but in most instances of adoption have received broad legislative support that frequently transcends partisan boundaries. This pattern is further reflected in those states that are considering “second generation” RPSs with heftier requirements, although conflict is increasingly evident in state debates over how high to set future targets and whether or not to give favored status to select renewable energy sources that are lagging behind others due to higher costs. Among the 22 RPSs established to date, sixteen were enacted with a Republican governor, five with a Democrat, and one with an Independent. Hence, RPS bills have been signed into law by a diverse array of state executives including then-Governor George W. Bush (R-Texas), George Pataki (R-New York), and Edward Rendell (D-Pennsylvania). Legislative control at the point of enactment has been more evenly divided between parties. Regardless of partisan composition of state government, these policies have consistently drawn a rather broad coalition of support. In turn, one increasingly sees formal representation in the state legislative process from renewable energy developers who have established a foothold in the state and are eager to expand their role through RPS expansion (Rabe and Mundo 2007). In numerous states, such organizations are far more visible and influential in RPS deliberations than conventional environmental advocacy groups.

## **RPS draws strong political support independent of political party**

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RPS enactment and expansion appear to draw strong political support independent of party lines. States are enacting or expanding RPSs for multiple reasons, including economic development opportunities and a more reliable and diversified supply of electricity.

\*\*\* A2: Federalism Disadvantage

## **States would welcome federal action on RPS**

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Despite persisting intergovernmental concerns, state officials generally recognize and welcome constructive forms of federal engagement. They perceive the federal production tax credit as an essential step to equalize the playing field with conventional sources that have long received a range of governmental subsidies. They also acknowledge the need for federal assistance in improving transmission capacity, particularly given the challenge of tapping renewable sources in remote areas and finding ways to transfer such electricity to high-demand areas. In turn, many state officials note that the federal government could also promote interstate learning about RPS experience and help with the development of common metrics to determine greenhouse gas impacts as well as foster cross-state collaboration.

## **Renewable Portfolio Standards one of the most widely used policy tools at the state level**

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Since the release of our 2002 report on state-level climate activity, *Greenhouse and Statehouse: The Evolving State Government Role in Climate Change*, the pace of innovation and adoption has quickened. States are taking a broad range of actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of the most widely-used policy tools is the creation of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). These standards generally mandate that renewable energy provide an increasing share of state’s electricity. As of mid 2006, 22 states and the District of Columbia have implemented an RPS.

## **State RPS solutions need Federal Action to expand**

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This report illustrates a classic case of federalism in energy and environmental policy. States adopting RPSs are providing actual data and real-world models, and the early successes of these states are changing the debate about what states can individually accomplish with their energy systems, how states can cooperate regionally, and whether a federal RPS may be feasible. These states are also, however, pushing up against the limits of what states can do without federal support and coordination. Engagement between state and federal policy makers on this issue has been surprisingly limited, and is overdue. These policy experiments may prove a deciding factor in the energy path that the United States chooses to take, demonstrating that renewables can be a viable part of our energy future.

**\*\*\* Topicality Answers**

**RPS policies mandate a certain percentage of power from renewable sources**

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One of the most widely-used policy tools involves creation of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). Such policies mandate that utilities operating within a state must provide a designated amount or percentage of power from renewable sources as a portion of their overall provision of electricity.

\*\*\* Federalism Links

## **States adamant federal policies should not preempt RPS policies**

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States also remain concerned by their very limited inclusion in Congressional debates over various energy and climate initiatives. Most state officials interviewed for the case studies readily acknowledge they knew little or nothing about various federal RPS proposals that have been advanced in the U.S. Senate; they are adamant that states have taken the lead amid federal inertia and that the collective state experience with this policy tool should be studied carefully in guiding any future federal actions. In particular, state officials are opposed to any federal legislation that would preempt or constrain existing state policies and are very concerned about any steps that would penalize them for taking early actions. There appears to be particular concern among state officials about avoiding one of the unexpected consequences of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. In that case, the level of sulfur dioxide allowance authorized for expanding renewable energy was set quite low (one ton of emissions for each 500 mWh of new renewables). The small number of allowances provided to incentivize renewable energy was not sufficient to make renewables competitive with the cheaper compliance options of switching to lower-sulfur coal or SO<sub>2</sub> scrubbers.

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Many areas of state energy policy are enormously contentious, particularly those that propose significant changes in practice for privately held utilities that have traditionally dominated service delivery in a jurisdiction. These controversies have been evident in recent years in the battles in numerous state capitals over proposed restructuring (or deregulation) of electricity wholesale and retail rates (Brown 2001). Renewable portfolio standards indeed call for significant changes from past practice, but in most instances of adoption have received broad legislative support that frequently transcends partisan boundaries. This pattern is further reflected in those states that are considering “second generation” RPSs with heftier requirements, although conflict is increasingly evident in state debates over how high to set future targets and whether or not to give favored status to select renewable energy sources that are lagging behind others due to higher costs. Among the 22 RPSs established to date, sixteen were enacted with a Republican governor, five with a Democrat, and one with an Independent. Hence, RPS bills have been signed into law by a diverse array of state executives including then-Governor George W. Bush (R-Texas), George Pataki (R-New York), and Edward Rendell (D-Pennsylvania). Legislative control at the point of enactment has been more evenly divided between parties. Regardless of partisan composition of state government, these policies have consistently drawn a rather broad coalition of support. In turn, one increasingly sees formal representation in the state legislative process from renewable energy developers who have established a foothold in the state and are eager to expand their role through RPS expansion (Rabe and Mundo 2007). In numerous states, such organizations are far more visible and influential in RPS deliberations than conventional environmental advocacy groups.

## **RPS draws strong political support independent of political party**

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RPS enactment and expansion appear to draw strong political support independent of party lines. States are enacting or expanding RPSs for multiple reasons, including economic development opportunities and a more reliable and diversified supply of electricity.

\*\*\* A2: Federalism Disadvantage

## **States would welcome federal action on RPS**

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Despite persisting intergovernmental concerns, state officials generally recognize and welcome constructive forms of federal engagement. They perceive the federal production tax credit as an essential step to equalize the playing field with conventional sources that have long received a range of governmental subsidies. They also acknowledge the need for federal assistance in improving transmission capacity, particularly given the challenge of tapping renewable sources in remote areas and finding ways to transfer such electricity to high-demand areas. In turn, many state officials note that the federal government could also promote interstate learning about RPS experience and help with the development of common metrics to determine greenhouse gas impacts as well as foster cross-state collaboration.

## **Renewable Portfolio Standards one of the most widely used policy tools at the state level**

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Since the release of our 2002 report on state-level climate activity, *Greenhouse and Statehouse: The Evolving State Government Role in Climate Change*, the pace of innovation and adoption has quickened. States are taking a broad range of actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of the most widely-used policy tools is the creation of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). These standards generally mandate that renewable energy provide an increasing share of state’s electricity. As of mid 2006, 22 states and the District of Columbia have implemented an RPS.

## **State RPS solutions need Federal Action to expand**

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This report illustrates a classic case of federalism in energy and environmental policy. States adopting RPSs are providing actual data and real-world models, and the early successes of these states are changing the debate about what states can individually accomplish with their energy systems, how states can cooperate regionally, and whether a federal RPS may be feasible. These states are also, however, pushing up against the limits of what states can do without federal support and coordination. Engagement between state and federal policy makers on this issue has been surprisingly limited, and is overdue. These policy experiments may prove a deciding factor in the energy path that the United States chooses to take, demonstrating that renewables can be a viable part of our energy future.

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One of the most widely-used policy tools involves creation of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). Such policies mandate that utilities operating within a state must provide a designated amount or percentage of power from renewable sources as a portion of their overall provision of electricity.

\*\*\* Federalism Links

## **States adamant federal policies should not preempt RPS policies**

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States also remain concerned by their very limited inclusion in Congressional debates over various energy and climate initiatives. Most state officials interviewed for the case studies readily acknowledge they knew little or nothing about various federal RPS proposals that have been advanced in the U.S. Senate; they are adamant that states have taken the lead amid federal inertia and that the collective state experience with this policy tool should be studied carefully in guiding any future federal actions. In particular, state officials are opposed to any federal legislation that would preempt or constrain existing state policies and are very concerned about any steps that would penalize them for taking early actions. There appears to be particular concern among state officials about avoiding one of the unexpected consequences of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. In that case, the level of sulfur dioxide allowance authorized for expanding renewable energy was set quite low (one ton of emissions for each 500 mWh of new renewables). The small number of allowances provided to incentivize renewable energy was not sufficient to make renewables competitive with the cheaper compliance options of switching to lower-sulfur coal or SO<sub>2</sub> scrubbers.

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This policy is not unique to the United States, as it is employed by a number of national governments as well as subnational entities that range from the state of South Australia to the province of Prince Edward Island. But they have proliferated among the American states at a rapid rate, having been adopted by 22 states and the District of Columbia as of mid 2006, with a strong likelihood of continued expansion in coming years. Well over half of the American public now lives in a state in which an RPS is in operation and at least one state has such a policy in every region of the nation except the Southeast.

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The employment of portfolio standards to promote expanded use of renewable energy is neither a new concept nor one that is exclusively American. It represents a blending of policy strategies with a combination of regulation and deference to market preferences that is a hallmark of more recent innovations in American environmental and energy policy (Mazmanian and Kraft 2000). For most states, establishing an RPS merely involves an incremental expansion of existing regulatory powers over electricity generation and distribution within their boundaries. Alongside their historic and pivotal roles in overseeing the regulation of electric utilities, market restructuring, approval and siting of new generating facilities, and electricity rate-setting and taxation, states have for decades sought ways to promote renewable energy sources as well as energy conservation (Teske 2004; Gormley 1983; Smeloff and Asmus 1997). Consequently, many state officials view portfolio standards as simply one additional mechanism to respond to public demand for an electricity supply that is as reliable, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly as possible.

## **Future Federal action unclear on RPS**

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It remains unclear whether the federal government might at some point draw larger lessons from the states and develop a nation-wide version of an RPS that thoughtfully and systematically builds on the best practices of state experience. At present, the American experience resembles that of other federated systems of government, such as the European Union and Australia. In all of these cases, RPSs continue to proliferate and mature, with the possibility of eventual incorporation into a policy that applies across jurisdictions. For now, states have moved to the cutting edge of this issue both domestically and internationally, having evolved in recent years from modest experimentation to the assumption of central roles in this area of climate policy development.

## **RPS policies combine mandates and credits to be sold**

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Individual state RPSs differ from one another in detail but have many similar design features. All RPSs enacted to date establish some specification of a percentage or absolute amount of electricity generation or capacity that designated suppliers in a state are required to provide by a particular date. Each state program defines what constitutes a qualifying renewable electricity source (Table 2) and, over time, increases the percentage or amount of capacity or generation that must be provided from renewable sources to meet the standard. Most states also allow regulated parties to generate their own renewable supply or purchase credits from other suppliers. The so-called “renewable energy credit” (REC) system follows other market-based mechanisms that allow options for assuring compliance, enabling suppliers to meet regulatory requirements in the most inexpensive way feasible. In turn, each state RPS designates a lead governmental agency, most commonly the state public utility commission, to oversee most aspects of implementation.

## **States need a consistent renewable energy policy**

**Rabe, B.G., June, 2006** [University of Michigan], “Race to the Top: The Expanding Role of U.S. State Renewable Portfolio Standards”, Pew Center on Global Climate Change, <http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/RPSReportFinal%2Epdf>

Fourth, as the United States moves toward a *de facto* national RPS through a tapestry of state-based programs, it is important to find ways that the federal government can play a constructive and supportive role. President George W. Bush signed the Texas RPS into law in 1999 and two former cabinet-rank officers took similar steps when they served as governors of their respective states (New Jersey and Wisconsin). That statehouse experience has not, however, necessarily translated into constructive federal engagement and support for continued state experimentation with RPSs. Indeed, it is difficult to understate the antipathy individuals responsible for different areas of RPS development and implementation at the state level express over their dealings with the federal government. This cuts across partisan and regional lines and reflects a deep state-based desire that, in the words of one official, “the feds not come in and mess up all the good stuff we’ve been trying to do.” Repeated fluctuation in the federal production tax credit for renewable energy has fostered a boom-and-bust cycle for renewable development in a number of states, leaving significant lags in the development of renewables during those periods in which the credit has been terminated or its status has remained uncertain. Officials in Texas and other states with large renewable targets contend that this fluctuation has been the single biggest impediment to even further expansion of renewable capacity. In this instance, most state officials welcome the recent extension of the credit in the 2005 Energy Act as one of the more constructive federal actions in many years.

## **Congressional action needed to realize substantial renewable portfolio energy gains**

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,  
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

While many states are making important strides in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with renewable standards, substantially greater benefits could be achieved if Congress adopted a national standard. A July 2004 UCS analysis examined the costs and benefits of a 20 percent by 2020 renewable standard, and found that America would increase its total renewable power to 180,000 MW in 2020—nearly 11 times more than current levels.[3]

### \*\*\* Solvency

## US has responsibility and interest to reduce CO2 through RPS

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Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
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With only five percent of the world population, the United States produces nearly 25 percent of annual global heat-trapping emissions.[4] Electricity generation accounts for fully one-third of these emissions.[5] We have a responsibility and a compelling interest to significantly reduce these harmful emissions. Renewable electricity standards offer a smart, affordable climate solution with a proven track record.

## Interstate collaboration would work with RPS programs

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Interstate collaboration could also take other forms, allowing neighboring RPS states to trade RECs and encourage integration between RPS implementation and other state policies designed to reduce greenhouse gases. One could also envision common efforts to build respective renewable sources through both informal and formal agreements between states. In recent years, multiple states have demonstrated new ways to work toward common cause in areas ranging from tax policy to vehicle registration to regional attainment of ozone standards, all with the intent of benefiting all participating states (Greenblatt 2005; Engel 2005; Zimmerman 2004). Renewable energy—and RPSs—may offer similar opportunities for states, much as other states are beginning to join common cause on other climate initiatives. In the case of cap-and-trade programs, for example, New York and seven other eastern states have concluded that it makes more sense to work together than separately, leading to the evolution of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (De Palma 2005). More broadly, states might also expand opportunities to work with other neighbors, such as Canadian provinces, in instances where considerable energy is already shared and similar policies are emerging between respective states and provinces.

## 20 Percent National Standard would cut CO2 emissions in half

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The 20 percent national standard would reduce the projected growth in power plant CO2 emissions under a business-as-usual scenario by more than half, or 434 MMT per year by 2020. This level of reductions is equivalent to taking nearly 65 million cars off the road or planting 104 million acres of trees—an area approximately the size of Oregon and Washington State combined. Even a 10 percent standard would deliver substantial climate benefits, reducing annual CO2 emissions by 166 MMT by 2020. Studies by the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration have shown similar results.

## RPS standards cut CO2 levels

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[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

This commitment to increasing renewable energy at the state level will have a significant impact on reducing CO2 emissions. By 2017, state standards will reduce total annual CO2 emissions by nearly 75 million metric tons (MMT)—the equivalent of taking 11.1 million cars off the road or planting 17.9 million acres of trees. The standards in California, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas alone account for 70 percent of the projected reductions.

RPS have worked successfully in the past

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Practical solutions do exist. For example, 40 percent of U.S. states have adopted a renewable electricity standard—a policy that requires electricity suppliers to gradually increase their use of renewable energy such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass. These states are demonstrating that renewable standards are an affordable solution to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and other unhealthy air emissions, while alleviating the harmful impact that fossil fuel extraction, transport, and use have on land and water resources.

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## **States need a consistent renewable energy policy**

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Fourth, as the United States moves toward a *de facto* national RPS through a tapestry of state-based programs, it is important to find ways that the federal government can play a constructive and supportive role. President George W. Bush signed the Texas RPS into law in 1999 and two former cabinet-rank officers took similar steps when they served as governors of their respective states (New Jersey and Wisconsin). That statehouse experience has not, however, necessarily translated into constructive federal engagement and support for continued state experimentation with RPSs. Indeed, it is difficult to understate the antipathy individuals responsible for different areas of RPS development and implementation at the state level express over their dealings with the federal government. This cuts across partisan and regional lines and reflects a deep state-based desire that, in the words of one official, “the feds not come in and mess up all the good stuff we’ve been trying to do.” Repeated fluctuation in the federal production tax credit for renewable energy has fostered a boom-and-bust cycle for renewable development in a number of states, leaving significant lags in the development of renewables during those periods in which the credit has been terminated or its status has remained uncertain. Officials in Texas and other states with large renewable targets contend that this fluctuation has been the single biggest impediment to even further expansion of renewable capacity. In this instance, most state officials welcome the recent extension of the credit in the 2005 Energy Act as one of the more constructive federal actions in many years.

## **Congressional action needed to realize substantial renewable portfolio energy gains**

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,  
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

While many states are making important strides in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with renewable standards, substantially greater benefits could be achieved if Congress adopted a national standard. A July 2004 UCS analysis examined the costs and benefits of a 20 percent by 2020 renewable standard, and found that America would increase its total renewable power to 180,000 MW in 2020—nearly 11 times more than current levels.[3]

### \*\*\* Solvency

## US has responsibility and interest to reduce CO2 through RPS

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,  
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

With only five percent of the world population, the United States produces nearly 25 percent of annual global heat-trapping emissions.[4] Electricity generation accounts for fully one-third of these emissions.[5] We have a responsibility and a compelling interest to significantly reduce these harmful emissions. Renewable electricity standards offer a smart, affordable climate solution with a proven track record.

## Interstate collaboration would work with RPS programs

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Interstate collaboration could also take other forms, allowing neighboring RPS states to trade RECs and encourage integration between RPS implementation and other state policies designed to reduce greenhouse gases. One could also envision common efforts to build respective renewable sources through both informal and formal agreements between states. In recent years, multiple states have demonstrated new ways to work toward common cause in areas ranging from tax policy to vehicle registration to regional attainment of ozone standards, all with the intent of benefiting all participating states (Greenblatt 2005; Engel 2005; Zimmerman 2004). Renewable energy—and RPSs—may offer similar opportunities for states, much as other states are beginning to join common cause on other climate initiatives. In the case of cap-and-trade programs, for example, New York and seven other eastern states have concluded that it makes more sense to work together than separately, leading to the evolution of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (De Palma 2005). More broadly, states might also expand opportunities to work with other neighbors, such as Canadian provinces, in instances where considerable energy is already shared and similar policies are emerging between respective states and provinces.

## 20 Percent National Standard would cut CO2 emissions in half

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,  
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

The 20 percent national standard would reduce the projected growth in power plant CO2 emissions under a business-as-usual scenario by more than half, or 434 MMT per year by 2020. This level of reductions is equivalent to taking nearly 65 million cars off the road or planting 104 million acres of trees—an area approximately the size of Oregon and Washington State combined. Even a 10 percent standard would deliver substantial climate benefits, reducing annual CO2 emissions by 166 MMT by 2020. Studies by the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration have shown similar results.

## RPS standards cut CO2 levels

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,  
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

This commitment to increasing renewable energy at the state level will have a significant impact on reducing CO2 emissions. By 2017, state standards will reduce total annual CO2 emissions by nearly 75 million metric tons (MMT)—the equivalent of taking 11.1 million cars off the road or planting 17.9 million acres of trees. The standards in California, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas alone account for 70 percent of the projected reductions.

RPS have worked successfully in the past

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,  
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/clean\\_energy\\_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html)

Practical solutions do exist. For example, 40 percent of U.S. states have adopted a renewable electricity standard—a policy that requires electricity suppliers to gradually increase their use of renewable energy such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass. These states are demonstrating that renewable standards are an affordable solution to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and other unhealthy air emissions, while alleviating the harmful impact that fossil fuel extraction, transport, and use have on land and water resources.

\*\*\* A2: Politics Disadvantage

## **RPS Policies enjoy broad bipartisan support**

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Many areas of state energy policy are enormously contentious, particularly those that propose significant changes in practice for privately held utilities that have traditionally dominated service delivery in a jurisdiction. These controversies have been evident in recent years in the battles in numerous state capitals over proposed restructuring (or deregulation) of electricity wholesale and retail rates (Brown 2001). Renewable portfolio standards indeed call for significant changes from past practice, but in most instances of adoption have received broad legislative support that frequently transcends partisan boundaries. This pattern is further reflected in those states that are considering “second generation” RPSs with heftier requirements, although conflict is increasingly evident in state debates over how high to set future targets and whether or not to give favored status to select renewable energy sources that are lagging behind others due to higher costs. Among the 22 RPSs established to date, sixteen were enacted with a Republican governor, five with a Democrat, and one with an Independent. Hence, RPS bills have been signed into law by a diverse array of state executives including then-Governor George W. Bush (R-Texas), George Pataki (R-New York), and Edward Rendell (D-Pennsylvania). Legislative control at the point of enactment has been more evenly divided between parties. Regardless of partisan composition of state government, these policies have consistently drawn a rather broad coalition of support. In turn, one increasingly sees formal representation in the state legislative process from renewable energy developers who have established a foothold in the state and are eager to expand their role through RPS expansion (Rabe and Mundo 2007). In numerous states, such organizations are far more visible and influential in RPS deliberations than conventional environmental advocacy groups.

## **RPS draws strong political support independent of political party**

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RPS enactment and expansion appear to draw strong political support independent of party lines. States are enacting or expanding RPSs for multiple reasons, including economic development opportunities and a more reliable and diversified supply of electricity.

\*\*\* A2: Federalism Disadvantage

## **States would welcome federal action on RPS**

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Despite persisting intergovernmental concerns, state officials generally recognize and welcome constructive forms of federal engagement. They perceive the federal production tax credit as an essential step to equalize the playing field with conventional sources that have long received a range of governmental subsidies. They also acknowledge the need for federal assistance in improving transmission capacity, particularly given the challenge of tapping renewable sources in remote areas and finding ways to transfer such electricity to high-demand areas. In turn, many state officials note that the federal government could also promote interstate learning about RPS experience and help with the development of common metrics to determine greenhouse gas impacts as well as foster cross-state collaboration.

## **Renewable Portfolio Standards one of the most widely used policy tools at the state level**

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Since the release of our 2002 report on state-level climate activity, *Greenhouse and Statehouse: The Evolving State Government Role in Climate Change*, the pace of innovation and adoption has quickened. States are taking a broad range of actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of the most widely-used policy tools is the creation of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). These standards generally mandate that renewable energy provide an increasing share of state’s electricity. As of mid 2006, 22 states and the District of Columbia have implemented an RPS.

## **State RPS solutions need Federal Action to expand**

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This report illustrates a classic case of federalism in energy and environmental policy. States adopting RPSs are providing actual data and real-world models, and the early successes of these states are changing the debate about what states can individually accomplish with their energy systems, how states can cooperate regionally, and whether a federal RPS may be feasible. These states are also, however, pushing up against the limits of what states can do without federal support and coordination. Engagement between state and federal policy makers on this issue has been surprisingly limited, and is overdue. These policy experiments may prove a deciding factor in the energy path that the United States chooses to take, demonstrating that renewables can be a viable part of our energy future.

**\*\*\* Topicality Answers**

**RPS policies mandate a certain percentage of power from renewable sources**

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One of the most widely-used policy tools involves creation of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). Such policies mandate that utilities operating within a state must provide a designated amount or percentage of power from renewable sources as a portion of their overall provision of electricity.

\*\*\* Federalism Links

## **States adamant federal policies should not preempt RPS policies**

**Rabe, B.G., June, 2006** [University of Michigan], “Race to the Top: The Expanding Role of U.S. State Renewable Portfolio Standards”, Pew Center on Global Climate Change, <http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/RPSReportFinal%2Epdf>

States also remain concerned by their very limited inclusion in Congressional debates over various energy and climate initiatives. Most state officials interviewed for the case studies readily acknowledge they knew little or nothing about various federal RPS proposals that have been advanced in the U.S. Senate; they are adamant that states have taken the lead amid federal inertia and that the collective state experience with this policy tool should be studied carefully in guiding any future federal actions. In particular, state officials are opposed to any federal legislation that would preempt or constrain existing state policies and are very concerned about any steps that would penalize them for taking early actions. There appears to be particular concern among state officials about avoiding one of the unexpected consequences of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. In that case, the level of sulfur dioxide allowance authorized for expanding renewable energy was set quite low (one ton of emissions for each 500 mWh of new renewables). The small number of allowances provided to incentivize renewable energy was not sufficient to make renewables competitive with the cheaper compliance options of switching to lower-sulfur coal or SO<sub>2</sub> scrubbers.