

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
STATE ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD
*Resolution 08-02***

Topic: U.S. Department of Energy, Cooperative Extension System and State Energy Offices collaboration on reinventing the “Rebuild America Program”

Background: Record energy prices and a heavy reliance on fossil fuels are resulting in increased interest in energy efficiency and the utilization of renewable energy when heating, cooling and lighting American buildings. The adoption of new technologies, energy conserving practices and renewable energy could be enhanced through demonstration and educational efforts that provide knowledge and focus on behavior change. The Office of Energy Efficiency of the U.S. Department of Energy (EERE), land-grant universities and state energy offices are actively engaged in developing new technologies, researching energy-efficiency practices, evaluating renewable energy sources and supporting the market transformation of these activities. Significant energy savings could be realized if end-users adopt these technologies and practices, and make behavior changes.

The Cooperative Extension System’s (CES) network of over 3,000 county Extension offices provides a direct connection to community partnerships that can play a key role in transformational learning. This approach seeks actionable change in behavior, habits and practices. CES is launching a national effort, called **eXtension**, designed to provide continuous learning opportunities for American consumers. Incorporating energy-efficiency and renewable energy education into this educational system could provide EERE an important outreach opportunity to its stakeholders. Combining these activities with ongoing state energy office initiatives will help leverage EERE’s efforts to maximize the acceptance and adoption of energy-efficiency and renewable energy practices across the nation.

Issue: State energy offices and EERE have long recognized that Americans do not fully appreciate or understand the significant benefits that renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies offer. A better consumer understanding of these technologies and the benefits derived from utilizing renewable energy and adopting energy efficiency is necessary. Increased educational efforts regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy will improve the rate of adoption by end users. A reinvention of the “Rebuild America Program” engaging the collective resources of EERE, CES and state energy offices can serve as a highly effective delivery mechanism to help educate America.

Recommendation: The State Energy Advisory Board (STEAB) strategic focus areas of Accelerate Energy Efficiency Market Transformation (#1) and Facilitate Renewable Energy Advancement (#3) both identify consumer education as a key focus. The success of a reinvented “Rebuild America Program” is also dependant on consumer adoption. The CES and the state energy offices have a history of consumer trust and an educational network that connects with consumers at the local level.

Therefore, members of the STEAB respectfully encourage EERE to pursue collaborative efforts with CES and state energy offices to reinvent the “Rebuild America Program.”

Unanimously Adopted by the STEAB on February 21, 2008