



Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

EXPAND RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY GENERATING CAPACITY

Position Statement

Adopted September 14, 2016

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. is committed to expanding the use of Florida-based renewable energy resources for the generation of clean, safe, reliable, and affordable electrical power.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that Florida surpasses most states in the production and consumption of electricity. The majority of electricity produced in Florida is generated from imported coal (almost 23%) and natural gas (61%). While fossil fuels are dependable and efficient, there are undesirable trade-offs inherent in their use, including price volatility, security concerns over dependence on imports, the possibility of supply constraints or disruptions and the release of hazardous pollutants into the environment. Nuclear energy accounts for 12 percent of electric generation. Nuclear energy enables greater energy independence and a reduction in atmospheric emissions, but with the attendant catastrophic risks of reactor core meltdown, terrorism or materials diverted or stolen for 'dirty' bombs, and the lack of a responsible long-term solution for disposing of high-level radioactive waste. Only a small percentage of energy resources used to generate electricity are renewable. Increased use of Florida-based renewable energy resources—sunlight, wind, ocean currents, agricultural and municipal waste—has enormous potential for mitigating the adverse socioeconomic and environmental impacts of fossil fuels and nuclear energy.

A broad spectrum of advanced and emerging technologies harness the energy in renewable resources to generate electricity. The abundance of sunshine in Florida is ideal for solar power (radiant energy absorbed from the sun), including on-site 'rooftop' solar photovoltaic systems and solar thermal pool heating systems, in addition to utility-scale concentrated solar power plants. Biomass energy (chemical energy harnessed from organic matter) offers another tremendous opportunity. Due to a year-around growing season, Florida ranks first in the U.S. in annual growth of inedible plant biomass. Homegrown resources, such as bagasse (crushed sugarcane refuse), citrus pulp, invasive plants and forestry byproducts can support a sustainable biomass-to-energy industry. New municipal solid waste technologies designed to convert collected trash and garbage into electricity have proven to be both relatively inexpensive sources of renewable energy, and an effective waste management solution that reduces the amount of waste entering landfills by nearly 87%. Technological innovations are making renewable energy more accessible than ever before. Solar photovoltaics, concentrated solar power, biomass and municipal solid waste technologies are technically ready for accelerated deployment. These technologies could contribute a much greater share of the electricity supply than they do today. Other promising technologies require further development before they can be considered viable entrants into the marketplace. For instance, the hydrokinetic power (kinetic energy harnessed from waves, tides or currents) industry is developing turbine arrays capable of delivering electricity on a commercial scale within the decade. Preliminary research indicates that capturing just 0.1% the energy available in the strong ocean currents of the Gulf Stream System could supply Florida with 35% of our electricity needs.

The environmental benefits of renewable energy are well known. Many studies conclude that the life-cycle (manufacturing, installation, operation and maintenance, dismantling and decommissioning) environmental harm associated with renewable electricity production is minimal. Transitioning to a high renewable electricity supply would allow Florida to meet its growing energy needs more sustainably—helping to create a cleaner, healthier and brighter future.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. recognizes that electricity is essential to the comfort, productivity and safety of Floridians. For a future powered by clean, safe, reliable and affordable energy, Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. supports the following:

To Expand Use of Renewable Energy for Generating Electrical Power

- Legislate and implement an achievable Renewable Portfolio Standard (i.e.: mandate requiring utilities in Florida to generate or purchase a specified portion of their energy from renewable sources)
- Develop consistent federal and state energy policies that advance the deployment of renewable energy technologies
- Accelerate research, development and demonstration of emerging renewable energy technologies through strategic partnerships with universities and research centers, governmental agencies, private industry and utility providers
- Appropriate consistent, long-term federal, state and local financial incentives sufficient to attract venture capital investment to expedite the commercialization of renewable energy technologies
- Allow third-party energy sales and power purchase agreements (e.g.: a building owner offering to sell photovoltaic electricity generated on-site to tenants)
- Improve education and public outreach programs that promote the use of renewable energy, convey the benefits of energy efficiencies and encourage participation in energy conservation

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