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REPS Repeal Bill Subjected to Sudden Committee Changeup in Effort to Resurrect Momentum

Procedural maneuvers unlikely to improve bill's prospects

RALEIGH – In a move that added another odd twist to the uncomfortable course of House Bill 298, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) repeal bill, Rep. Mike Hager has altered the process for the bill's consideration. In an attempt to resurrect the bill's flagging momentum, Rep. Hager has arranged for the North Carolina General Assembly's Public Utilities and Energy Committee that he chairs to jump the queue and hear the bill next instead of allowing it to proceed to the House Committees on Environment and Regulatory Reform as originally planned. The Public Utilities and Energy Committee is now set to take the bill up on a rushed schedule at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 24, 2013.

Chairman Hager pulled four other bills from his Committee's schedule in order to clear the way for this last minute gambit. The sudden change seems to have been driven by the fact that momentum behind H298 had slowed considerably as well as by the expectation that the bill did not have sufficient votes to pass the Environment Committee. Even with this change in process, H298 is likely to face some tough sledding in Chairman Hager's own Public Utilities Committee due to a growing awareness that many of the assumptions underlying the bill are not supported by the data.

"The problem with the bill is that it is simply wrong on the merits," said Betsy McCorkle, Director of Government Affairs for the NC Sustainable Energy Association. "Late game procedural maneuvers can't cure that fundamental flaw."

Chief among the bill's flawed premises is the mistaken belief that the REPS law raises electricity rates for North Carolina residents. Information from a recent study by RTI International and La Capra Associates, Inc. shows that consumers will actually realize more than \$173 million in cost savings between 2007 and 2026 due to the state's clean energy policies, including the REPS. The study also found that over the past six years North Carolina reaped \$1.7 billion in total economic benefit from clean energy policies.

The hearing will be held in Room 643 of the Legislative Office Building in downtown Raleigh. There will be an audio feed via the NCGA's website for those unable to attend in person. To access the audio go to the following link (<http://www.ncleg.net/Audio/Audio.html>) and then click on "Appropriations Committee Room (Rm 643)".

About the NC Sustainable Energy Association:

Founded in 1978, the NC Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization of individuals, businesses, government and non-profits working to ensure a sustainable future by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in North Carolina through education, public policy and economic development. NCSEA has been the "go-to" leader in shaping North Carolina's commitment to renewable energy, energy efficiency, high performance building, smart grid and electric vehicle jobs and economic opportunities in communities all across our state. Learn more at www.energync.org