

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 16, 2008

CONTACT:

- P.S. Reilly (report author), President, The Athena Institute – 425-576-8373
- Senator Curt McKenzie, Idaho Legislative Interim Committee for Energy, Environment and Technology - 208-344-4379
- Rich Rayhill, Vice President, Ridgeline Energy - 208-841-5037
- Dar Olberding, Legislative Advisor, Idaho Grain Producers - 208-761-6012
- Rhys Roth, Climate Solutions – 360-480-6749

New Report: Efficiency and Renewables can help Shield Idaho from Energy Volatility

Download the report, key findings and case studies at www.harvestcleanenergy.org/IdahoEnergy .

BOISE – Idaho leaders can take steps to shield Idaho families, farms and businesses from increasingly volatile global energy markets, according to a new report. *Securing Idaho's Energy Future: The Role of Energy Efficiency and Natural Resources* suggests Idaho can create thousands of jobs while helping to control energy costs by developing renewable and energy efficiency resources.

"Idaho's heavy reliance on fossil fuel imports is a growing source of economic vulnerability," said report author P.S. Reilly, President of the Athena Institute. "In contrast, Idaho is rich in renewable energy and efficiency opportunities. This report lays out steps Idaho leaders can take to leverage these resources and protect Idaho's economy."

Key Findings:

- Idaho's families, farms and businesses spend over \$3.7 billion a year for energy, 80 percent of which is produced elsewhere. This is a significant drain of money out of the state's economy.
- Idaho imports most of its energy. Changing market conditions indicate the state cannot count on a reliable supply of cheap and plentiful imports into the future.
- Idaho can create thousands of high-wage clean tech jobs by capitalizing on renewable energy resources – including wind, geothermal, solar, and biomass – and upgrading the efficiency of buildings, equipment, and other facilities. Clean tech is one of the world's fastest growing industry sectors. With the right investments, Idaho can compete for its share of clean tech jobs.
- Idaho can reasonably increase in-state energy sources from just 20% today to 50% by 2025 -- in ways that benefit the economy -- by aggressively developing renewable and efficiency resources. This will spread new jobs and millions in new tax revenues across the state's rural and urban communities, while helping to control energy and fertilizer costs for agriculture.

"Developing renewables within the state helps protect Idaho's economy from rising energy costs and keep more dollars circulating in the local economy," said Idaho Senator Curt McKenzie, Co-chair of the Idaho Interim Legislative Committee for Energy, Environment and Technology. "This report is a valuable resource in informing and guiding policymakers and citizens to build a more secure energy future."

The study builds on findings of the 2007 Idaho Energy Plan and was commissioned by Climate Solutions, a private, non-profit organization, through a grant from the Energy Foundation, whose

mission is to advance energy efficiency and renewable energy as essential components of a clean energy future.

"Renewable energy is a win for Idaho agriculture," said Dar Olberding with Idaho Grain Producers. "Whether you're talking about wind turbines on marginal land or biogenerators capturing energy from animal wastes, rural Idaho will benefit if we can move forward with more renewable energy production."

The report underwent review by key players in Idaho's energy markets, including renewable energy and efficiency experts, energy developers, academics working in the energy field, agriculture leaders and state officials. The report is intended to provide guidance to Idaho policymakers, who have the pressing task of designing and advancing new energy policies for Idaho during the 2009 legislative session.

"When an oilman like T. Boone Pickens decides to build a \$10 billion wind project, you know the wind business has come of age," said Rich Rayhill, Vice President of Ridgeline Energy, an Idaho wind energy firm. "The time for Idaho to get serious about renewable energy is now. It's a win-win-win: reduce energy imports, create high-wage jobs, and spur rural economic development."

Climate Solutions is dedicated to building a powerhouse clean energy industry in the Northwest that employs tens of thousands of people as a means to accelerate practical and profitable solutions to global warming and energy needs.

###