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## **WIRES Welcomes Progress In the Reid and Bingaman Transmission Bills**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – WIRES, a national trade organization that strongly supports investment in the nation’s electric transmission system, welcomed last week’s release of two related bills on Capitol Hill.

“I believe that the policy conversation about the future of the electric transmission system has entered a critical phase,” stated William Kaul of the CAPX 2020 Coalition and President of WIRES. “Lawmakers now recognize the importance of a stronger, more extensive transmission system for renewable energy and, indeed, for the health and security of our entire economy.”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) testified in support of his “Clean Renewable Energy and Economic Development Act” (S.539), stating that “. . . absent a permanent, long-term Federal commitment and major policy reforms, we are not close to reaching our national potential. Our landscape is dotted with renewable projects, but until now, few have been connecting the dots. The way to connect these dots is with a smart transmission grid . . .” Reid advocates greater federal authority over the grid.

The Majority Staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), issued for comment a draft bill that would extensively revise the Federal Power Act to institute wide-ranging reforms of the processes by which transmission lines are planned, reviewed and sited, and paid for. Testimony on the draft was taken at a Committee hearing on March 12. Additional transmission proposals are widely expected from other lawmakers on both sides of the Hill.

“The prospect of regulatory reform for transmission is heartening,” commented James Hoecker, Counsel to WIRES and former Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. “Congress and the Administration now appear ready to come to grips with the problems of the existing grid infrastructure – as well as how to extend the system to location-constrained resources. We need practical solutions that will endure and will ensure adequate transmission for all resources and loads.” WIRES is preparing comments on the legislation.

*WIRES (Working group for Investment in Reliable and Economic electric Systems) is a non-profit trade association of transmission providers, customers, renewable energy developers, and technology and equipment companies formed to promote investment in electric transmission and progressive state and federal policies that advance the economic and environmental benefits of a stronger grid. For more information, visit [www.wiresgroup.com](http://www.wiresgroup.com) or contact Jim Hoecker at 202-378-2316.*

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