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Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

This summer, the Senate and the House of Representatives passed their own versions of a clean Energy Bill. These victories were an important step in the larger battle for strong energy policy in America.

The final bill must include the House's 15% renewable electricity standard, which would require electric companies to obtain more power from clean, renewable sources like properly sited wind and sun. The Senate has passed similar provisions in the past, so special interests should not be allowed to undermine what is a majority position in both Congressional chambers.

The final Energy Bill must also include the Senate's hard-fought compromise provision that would require a 35 miles-per-gallon fuel economy standard for American automobiles by 2020. The auto lobby wants this provision replaced by a "do nothing" alternative, yet according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Senate's position on fuel standards would save consumers \$24 billion at the pump each year once the cleaner cars hit the road. Using cost-effective technologies to create these cleaner cars will also create over 170,000 new American jobs, including tens of thousands in the auto industry alone.

These provisions will help launch the clean energy economy in America. By reducing our reliance on dirty fossil fuels, they will also put us on the path to energy independence — and a healthier future.

Congress needs to stand up to industry and other clean energy opponents who want the Energy Bill weakened.

YOUR NAME
ORGANIZATION

FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
CONTACT AUDUBON'S
WASHINGTON, D.C.
OFFICE AT
202-861-2242, OR
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Letters to the Editor

The Letters to the Editor section of your local newspaper presents an ideal forum for getting your message to its readers, be they local citizens or members of your congressional delegation. More people read the letters to the editor section than almost any other part of the paper (except the comics, of course!). It's one of the first pages many elected officials turn to. Here are a few guidelines for getting your letter to the editor printed:

- Keep the length to about 250 words.
- Writing on behalf of your Chapter will give your letter more weight. Writing as an individual concerned citizen will create the impression of citizen support or opposition to an issue. Think about what your objective is when writing a letter to the editor.
- Avoid rambling sentences and big words.
- Type the letter—double spaced, one page maximum; many newspapers will let you submit your letter via email as well.
- Limit the number of points you make, and stay on the same subject.
- Be as factual as possible without being dull.
- Localize your letter—explain how the issue will affect your area.

- Accentuate the positive. When you criticize, also propose a solution to the problem, or a better alternative, if possible.

Your letter stands the best chance of getting printed when it responds to something recently printed in that newspaper, such as a news story, column, editorial, advertisement, or another letter. You can use the reference to that item as a springboard for stating your case.

Your letter can support and expand on something already in the news, make a point that was omitted, or disagree with and correct misinformation in whatever form it appeared.

And don't be afraid to ask for action—tell readers what you want them to do. This includes your elected representatives. You can be sure they read the letters to the editor. By putting their names in the letter and asking for action—a vote, co-sponsorship of a bill, an explanation—you get their attention fast.

