Senate is preparing a new version of the energy bill

After a vote to cut off a filibuster on the House-passed energy bill failed, the Senate is crafting a new version of the legislation. The House passed its bill Dec. 6 by a comfortable margin of 235-181, but a Dec. 7 cloture motion in the Senate did not come close to garnering the 60 votes needed. However, senators from both parties said they still want to pass an energy bill and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the Senate will continue to work toward a compromise bill that can pass. Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said he hopes a revised bill could be ready by today (Dec. 10) to send to the House.

Domenici singled out three sections of the House bill as problematic: renewable fuels (ethanol); the 15% renewable portfolio standard; and the $21 billion tax title. “An energy bill that contains a CAFE [corporate average fuel economy] compromise, a strong renewable fuels standard, and energy efficiency improvements is the right approach, and I’m willing to go back to work on such a bill right away,” Domenici said after the cloture vote.

The tax title in the House bill includes language to authorize $2 billion of Clean Renewable Energy Bonds, with one-third of the authorization going to public power utilities, one-third to rural electric cooperatives and one third to state/local/tribal governments. The CREBs provision also changes the allocation methodology for public power entities from the current “smallest to largest project” methodology to a “pro rata” methodology. APPA supports the changes to the program.

The renewable portfolio standard would require investor-owned utilities to provide 15% of their power from renewable resources by 2020 with an exemption for public power utilities and rural electric cooperatives. Consumer-owned utilities would have to opt-in to the program if they want to buy and sell the renewable credits under the trading regime established by the bill.

The House bill also includes long-term extensions of tax credits for renewable electricity, carbon capture and sequestration projects and biofuels production and tax credit bonds for renewable energy and conservation. It would also extend energy-efficiency tax incentives. The package establishes a new category of tax credit bonds for green community programs and initiatives designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The House bill authorizes $3 billion of Conservation Tax Credit Bonds, allocated to states and municipalities.
SMUD General Manager Jan Schori announces retirement

Sacramento Municipal Utility District General Manager Jan Schori announced Friday she will retire in early 2008 after 14 years of running the nation’s sixth largest public power utility. She announced her intention to retire to the SMUD board of directors Thursday night. Schori’s tenure is the longest of any general manager in SMUD’s 61-year history.

Her accomplishments include keeping electric rates among the lowest in California, vastly improving reliability, establishing SMUD as a leader in renewable and sustainable energy and energy efficiency, and raising customer satisfaction to levels that are among the best in the state, region and nation according to J.D. Power and Associates, SMUD said. Schori also served 15 years on the utility’s legal staff, including five years as general counsel.

As chair of APPA’s board in 2005, Schori initiated the association’s “Public Power is Good for Business” campaign. This photo shows her introducing a resolution to create that campaign during APPA’s Legislative Rally in February 2005.

As a strong proponent of public power’s value to customers and communities, she initiated APPA’s “Public Power is Good for Business” campaign during her time as board chair in 2004-05. She helped forge APPA board/staff consensus in crafting the influential "Restructuring at the Crossroads" white paper that led to the association’s ongoing Electric Market Reform Initiative.

She has also served as chair on the boards of the Large Public Power Council, the California Municipal Utilities Association and the National Business Council for Sustainable Energy. She is on the boards of the California Climate Action Registry and the national Alliance to Save Energy.
Schori received APPA’s highest honor, the Alex Radin Distinguished Service Award, in 2007.

“Jan has distinguished herself not only as a gifted utility manager but as a leader in public power nationally by serving as chair of the APPA board of directors,” said APPA President and CEO Mark Crisson. “Jan’s in-depth industry knowledge, keen insight and sense of humor set her apart. She is a tremendous asset to the public power community, and I hope her future plans include continued involvement with public power.”

“Jan has provided SMUD impeccable leadership in her 14 years as general manager,” said Susan Patterson, the president of the utility’s board. “At the helm of this utility she reinvented the way we provide service to our customers. She has always worked to make SMUD an environmentally friendly utility while keeping a watchful eye on the bottom line so customers got the most of their ratepayer dollar. She will be greatly missed.”