

## Green Power for Universities and Cities

Will Toor  
Director, University of Colorado  
Environmental Center  
Mayor, Boulder, Colorado  
February, 2002

## Student-led Purchase of Renewable Energy

- The first two colleges in the country to purchase renewable energy (University of Colorado-Boulder and Connecticut College) did so by raising student fees to cover the additional cost.

## University of Colorado-Boulder

- Early efforts with administration were unsuccessful
- Students went to student government unsuccessfully in 1999
- Student group placed on ballot spring 2000 - won by 5 to 1 margin, under slogan of "Clean Energy Now"

## Student Campaign

- Cooperation between student group, LAW Fund, and Excel Energy
- The "pinwheel people" and the "CU windfarm" made a big splash
- High quality ad campaign also got student attention

## University of Colorado - Boulder

- Student fee of \$1 raises \$50,000 annually
- University contracts with Excel Energy to purchase 2 million kwh of windpower
- One turbine at the Ponnequin facility is the "CU turbine" with the CU Buffs logo - which CU has used in multiple marketing efforts



### Connecticut College

- Students voted to increase their fees by **\$25** in spring 2001
- College contracts with Connecticut Energy Cooperative to purchase Green-e certified, renewable electricity

### University of Oregon

- Student Investment in solar energy
- Student government allocated \$100,000 in surplus funds to install photovoltaic panes on the student union building; looking for additional private sector donations
- May generate 30kw of electricity

### Administrative Initiatives

- Some schools have chosen to purchase green power through administrative funds
- Examples include Carnegie-Mellon University, Penn State , and the University of Pennsylvania, and Wesleyan University
- Cooperative investment in windfarm
- One big opportunity - clean energy for dormitories, paid for through rent

### Why Universities

- Potentially large market - 3000 institutions of higher education purchasing billions of dollars of electricity annually
- Strong student interest - willingness to invest \$
- Universities see competitive marketing advantage from being “green”

### Additional Marketing Approaches

- Athletic programs - often are auxiliary departments, often have strong interest in PR
- Housing departments - can build incremental energy cost right into student rental rates

### City of Boulder Wind Prehistory

- 1996 - city intervened on PSCO merger discussions at the PUC
- City asked for incentives and \$ for efficiency and renewables as merger condition
- City supported LAW Fund in negotiating Windsource as part of settlement

## Boulder Windsource Purchase

- Mayor Durgin announced in Sept 1997
- City purchased 250, 100kwh blocks - minimum required to be a “Windsource Champion”
- Municipal Building chosen as visible seat of government
- Press conference, featuring mayor and Frank Shorter, got wide media attention.

## Why did Boulder Buy Wind?

- Strong environmental ethic
- Support from constituents
- As an example for the private sector
- And - the mayor and city manager didn't mind the good publicity
- Other cities also made wind commitments- Denver also a “Windsource Champion”

## Municipal Initiatives

- Huge interest in clean energy by cities around the country
- Examples - Chicago has made large commitment to solar
- Santa Monica, CA. committed to 100% clean energy for the municipal government
- Most recently - San Francisco solar bond issue passed by over 70% - 11/01

## Opportunities

- Many cities adopting climate change commitments - green power purchase is great way to implement this
- Examples include Seattle and San Francisco
- Salt Lake city committed to Kyoto Protocol emissions targets
- New England governors making emissions commitments

## Opportunities - Green Building

- Many cities making commitments to green building - often require a minimum of silver rating on LEED scale
- State of Georgia considering this for all state buildings
- Market green power as way to meet these green building goals!