

# Planting the Seed: A Roll-Out of a Grassroots Strategy

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On Thursday, 27 January 2011, a RESNET-lead coalition met with key staff in Senators Snowe (R-ME) and Bingaman's (D-NM) offices, as well as with professional staff on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

These two offices are important because both Senators serve on the Committee on Finance and Senator Bingaman is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The coalition included the following organizations:

- Air Conditioning Contractors of America
- International Association of Certified Home Inspectors
- Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance
- Leading Buildings of America
- Insulation Contractors Association of America
- Home Depot
- Service Partners
- Structured Insulation Panel Association

## **The Outcome?**

We agreed to use the Advanced Energy Tax Incentives Act of 2010 (Senate Bill 3935), introduced in the last Congress, as a starting-point for future legislation.

We expect Senator Snowe's office, with Chairman Bingaman's office, to begin drafting legislation in the future, with the input of the coalition, to extend and improve energy efficiency tax provisions.

Please see the RESNET website for the key provisions of this bill, as it currently stands.

## **Why is this Important?**

*From CQ: "In a speech at the National Press Club earlier this month, New Mexico Democrat Jeff Bingaman called it 'essential' to bring 'stability and predictability to this part of the tax code in order to attract private capital to clean-energy projects.'"*



## We Need Your Help!

The United States Constitution in Article 1, Section 7: *All bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on the other bills.*

## What does this Mean?

We can have a bill drafted in the Senate, but unless the House can pass the same bill, the legislation cannot become law.

There are 435 members of the House of Representatives.





The House Committee on Ways and Means is the primary tax-writing committee.

Any tax-related bill in the House of Representatives must first pass this committee before full passage on the House floor.



Of these 435 members, 35 serve on the House Committee on Ways and Means.

**Committee on Ways and Means: Dave Camp, MI – Chairman**

**Majority**

Wally Herger, CA  
Sam Johnson, TX  
Kevin Brady, TX  
Paul Ryan, WI  
Devin Nunes, CA  
Pat Tiberi, OH  
Geoff Davis, KY  
Dave G. Reichert, WA  
Charles W. Boustany Jr., LA  
Dean Heller, NV  
Peter J. Roskam, IL  
Jim Gerlach, PA  
Tom Price, GA  
Vern Buchanan, FL  
Adrian Smith, NE  
Aaron Schock, IL  
Lynn Jenkins, KS  
Erik Paulsen, MN  
Rick Bern, ND  
Diane Black, TN

**Minority**

Sander Levin, MI – Ranking Member  
Charles B. Rangel, NY  
Fortney Pete Stark, CA  
Jim McDermott, WA  
John Lewis, GA  
Richard E. Neal, MA  
Xavier Becerra, CA  
Lloyd Doggett, TX  
Mike Thompson, CA  
John B. Larson, CT  
Earl Blumenauer, OR  
Ron Kind, WI  
Bill Pascrell Jr., NJ  
Shelley Berkley, NV  
Joseph Crowley, NY

**Contact Your Congressman!**



Look-up your Congressman at: <http://www.house.gov/zip/ZIP2Rep.html>



## 112<sup>th</sup> Congress

Now is the ideal time to become politically active in your district.

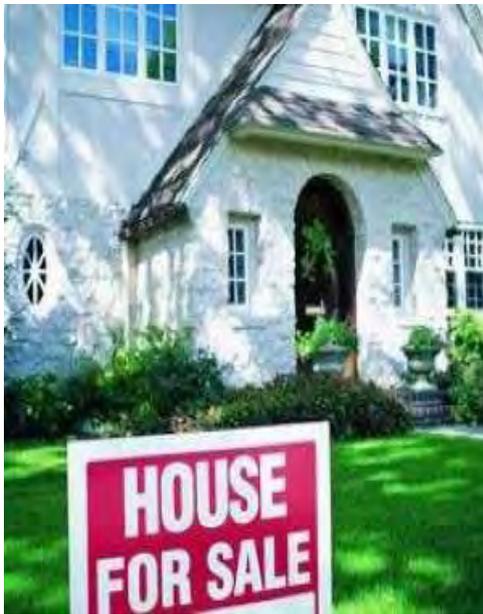
The 112<sup>th</sup> Congress has 87 *freshman Republicans* and 9 *freshman Democrats*, meaning nearly 1/4 of the House of Representatives are new members who need to hear from you.

Contact your Congressperson's local office that is closest to where you live or conduct business. You need to *build a relationship* with the District Director.

The District Director is traditionally someone with a long-standing relationship with the Congressperson and the best in touch with the local community.



Think about the connections that you already have to those in your community who are politically active. Do you know people who have a relationship with the District Director? Can they provide an introduction?





## The Meeting

Once a meeting is scheduled, bring others with whom you do business (ex. like-minded contractors) along.

Congressional staff like to see business leaders working together; there is strength in numbers.



## **Then What?**

District Directors know to alert staff in their Washington office to pay attention to local constituent concerns, like yours.

## Why a Grassroots Strategy? – To Build Momentum

Q: Why bother at the local level?



**A1:** In 2011, members of Congress will spend 20 weeks in their local communities.



**A2:** Members of Congress, and their staffs, talk to each other; they will all begin to hear the *same thing*.

Some of the most effective advocacy efforts have begun at the local level.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving



Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure



## Building Relationships

In addition to building momentum for our issues, it is also about building relationships.

Go to local events with your Representative.

Sign up for their newsletter.

Volunteer ...



These relationships will be important as you may also be concerned about current draconian proposals under discussion, such as ...

Examples:

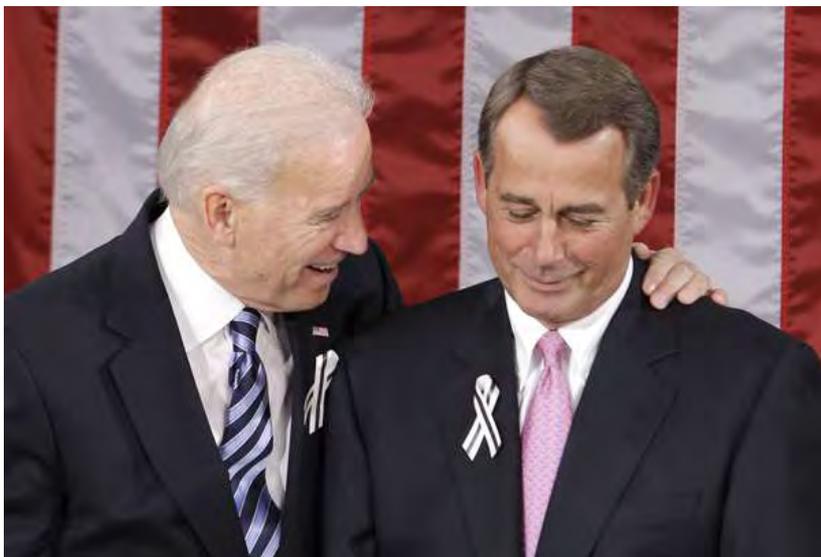
1. Reducing the EPA's budget by \$1.6 billion – cuts include programs such as Energy Star.
2. Restructuring Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.
3. Eliminating energy loan guarantees.

## Do's and Don'ts

**Do** build a relationship by being understanding and cooperative.

**Do not** be confrontational, especially if it takes some time to schedule a meeting.

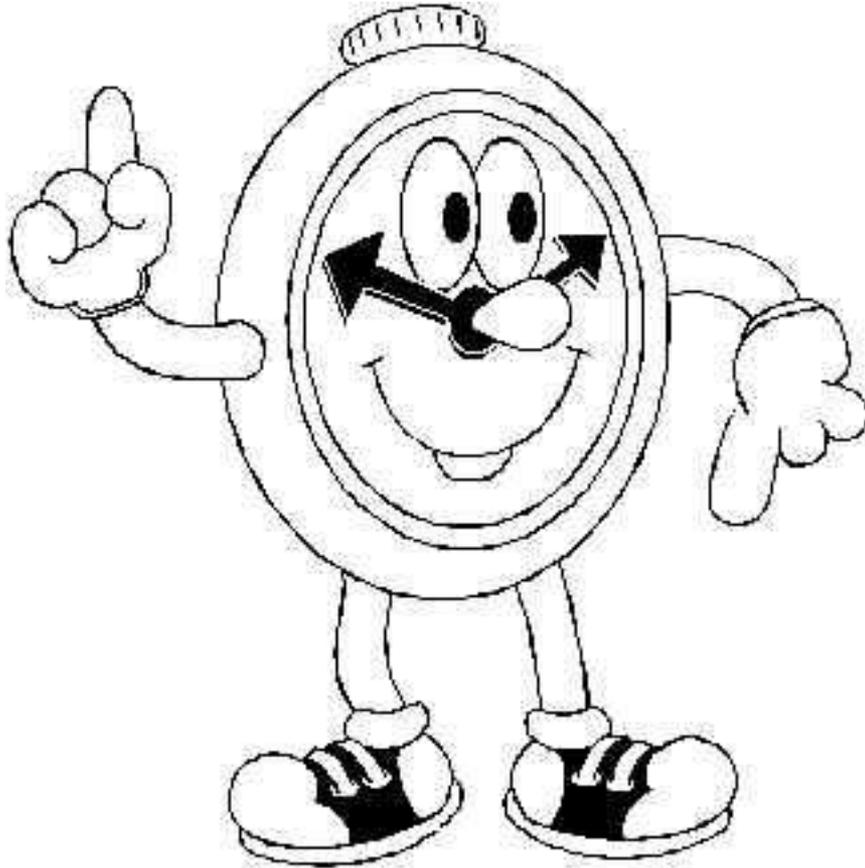
**Do not** be adversarial in light of party affiliation.



Do



Don't



Political action may seem both time-consuming and daunting.

We have provided resources, available on RESNET's website, to make this process easier for you.

<http://www.resnet.us/about/legislative-call-to-action>

**Contact Your Congressman!**



Look-up your Congressman at: <http://www.house.gov/zip/ZIP2Rep.html>

## Meeting Request

District Director's Name,

My company X is a member of a national organization, the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET), which conducts home energy efficiency audits. RESNET has over 4,500 members in all 50 states and is widely considered the standard-bearer for quality assurance within this field. Please see attached for additional information about RESNET.

As a resident of the Congressman's district, I was hoping to meet with you to introduce myself and discuss some of the projects my company is working on locally. Additionally, I wanted to speak with you about RESNET's federal agenda and the future of energy efficiency tax policy in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Please let me know what sort of availability you may have in the coming weeks and if you have any further questions.

Best,

## The Meeting

### **Explain who you are and what you do.**

- You are a small business with X number of employees.
- Talk about what happens when you get a home energy audit and the savings your customers see when they make the improvements.
- Mention the industry partners that you work with to give a sense of the broader economic footprint you have on the community.

### **Explain your experience with the existing energy efficiency tax policy.**

- When the tax credit for home energy audits (45L) is only extended on a year to year basis, this creates volatility in the market and makes planning difficult.
- Talk about your personal experience with this.

### **Explain your “ask.”**

- Tell him/her that your representative in Washington is working with several Senate offices to draft legislation, based off of an existing bill (summary below) to extend performance-based tax credits 45L and 25C, in addition to 25E for a period of 3-5 years.
- Explain that this legislation will also recognize RESNET as the authoritative independent “third-party.”
- As this legislation is being drafted in the Senate, RESNET needs your boss’ help with corresponding legislation in the House.
- Can you please speak with the Congressman about supporting a bill with these provisions in it?

### **Any questions?**

## **Advanced Energy Tax Incentives Act of 2010 (Senate bill 3935)**

### **Key Provisions:**

- Enables home and business owners to defray up-front costs of investing in energy-saving technologies, including performance-based tax credits for whole home retrofits.
- Makes \$2.5 billion in tax credits available to manufacturers dealing with clean renewable energy or enhanced enhanced energy efficiency products.
- Establishes a \$1 billion tax credit program to enable domestic manufacturers to undertake energy-saving measures that advance their competitiveness.
- Facilitates the growth of renewable electricity by creating a tax incentive for energy storage systems.

## After the Meeting

You will need to send a Thank You note on *your letterhead* that says the following:

District Director's Name,

Thank you for meeting with me on DATE to discuss the importance of extending certain tax provisions related to energy-efficiency to my business and to RESNET. I would be greatly appreciative if you could pass along my concerns to the appropriate staff member in your Washington office. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue and please let me know if you have any further questions.

Best,

Questions?



## Contact Information

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