

Missouri Support for Renewable Energy

Because supports for renewable energy are constantly changing, any attempt to list and discuss them is bound to contain inaccuracies and go out of date quickly. With that said, here is my best understanding of the supports offered by Missouri as of January, 2008:ⁱ

- Wood Energy Tax Credit—individuals or businesses processing forestry industry residues into fuels receive a tax credit of \$5.00 per ton.
- Energy Loan Program—school, local governments, institutions, public hospitals and water treatment facilities receive low cost loans for the installation of renewable and/or energy efficient technologies. Total budget limited to \$7 million for 2007 cycle.
- Utility loan and rebate programs—programs differ from utility to utility, but offer residences or businesses low cost loans or rebates on the installation of energy efficient and/or renewable technology, mainly heat pumps and water heaters. Participating utilities: City Utilities of Springfield, Columbia Water & Light, Co-Mo Electrical Cooperative, Independence Power and Light, Intercounty Electric Cooperative, Kansas City Power & Light, Kirkwood Electric, Laclede Gas, and Ozark Border Electric Cooperative.
- Missouri Building Energy Code—none, a glaring omission!
- Electrical interconnection standards—100kW maximum size. In a year, no new interconnections required beyond 5% of utility's peak load during previous year. Standard statewide interconnection agreement. Additional homeowner insurance required for systems up to 10 kW. Net metering credited to customer at utility's avoided-cost rate.
- Renewable portfolio standard—initiative petitions for a required renewable portfolio await certification. If certified, a proposition requiring 15% renewable energy by 2021 will be on the ballot in November, 2008.ⁱⁱ Until then, Missouri has an unenforced goal of 11% by 2020, and loopholes exist.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Solar easements—the right to use solar power is a property right, but to protect access to direct sunlight, one must negotiate an easement in writing. (§442.012 RSMo)
- Missouri Schools Going Solar—provided schools with 1 kW solar panel systems and educational modules on renewable energy. Appears to have run out of funding.

States vary widely in the support they offer renewable energy, but Missouri's supports are modest compared to those of some other states. The current renewable portfolio is undersized and not mandatory, there are no statewide energy efficiency standards for buildings, and there are no tax credits for the purchase of renewable energy equipment. We are missing-out on the opportunity to reap the benefits of these technologies. If we want to accelerate the transition to renewable energy and improved efficiency, and we should want to do that, we need to be doing more to encourage it.

ⁱ The source for this information are the Missouri page of the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency, <http://www.dsireusa.org/library/includes/map2.cfm?CurrentPageID=1&State=MO&RE=1&EE=1>, and the Renewable Energy pages of the web site of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, <http://dnr.mo.gov/energy/renewables/index.html>.

ⁱⁱ Information about the renewable energy standard ballot initiative retrieved 4/16/2008 at <http://renewmo.org>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Recall from the white papers on wind power that Denmark *already* generates 20% of its electricity with wind power. Missouri has set a goal of only half of that, set it 12 years into the future, and provided loopholes for utilities that do not wish to comply.