7 October 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baucus:

I am writing on behalf of IEEE-USA to urge your support for passage of the Storage Technology of Renewable and Green Energy Act of 2009 (S.1091). This bill introduced by Senator Ron Wyden would create tax credits for investment in storage projects that would accompany renewable energy projects.

If intermittent sources of renewal energy, such wind and solar, are to reach their full potential to contribute to the nation’s power requirements, technologies for large scale energy storage must be developed and deployed. Such Massive Electricity Storage (MES) systems convert electric energy to other forms of energy, which can be reconverted to electric energy when needed.

Today, the only well-established technology for MES is pumped hydroelectric storage in which electric power is used to pump water into a reservoir where it can later be converted to electricity during periods of peak demand by releasing it through a turbine. It has been estimated that more than 30 such systems are currently in use in the United States and about 150 in other countries. Expanded use of this technology depends on the availability of suitable geography. Efficiency, typically 70 percent, is a further limitation. Thus, other types of mass energy storage must be developed and incentivized. Passage of the Storage Technology of Renewable and Green Energy Act would be a strong step towards making this happen.

For more on energy storage and other methods of meeting the United States' demand for affordable, reliable and clean energy, see IEEE-USA’s National Energy Policy Recommendations at http://ieeeusa.org/policy/positions/energypolicy.pdf. IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of more than 215,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of the IEEE. IEEE-USA is part of the IEEE, the world's largest technical professional society with 370,000 members in 160 countries. For more information, please contact Bill Williams at (202) 530-8331, or at bill.williams@ieee.org.

Sincerely,

Gordon W. Day
IEEE-USA President

GWD/ww:mcs