

February 11, 2002

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy (S-1)
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Abraham:

As chairman of the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB), I am writing to request a meeting for our executive committee with you on Monday afternoon, February 25, 2002. I will be in Washington, D.C. attending the National Governors' Association Winter Meeting during this time. As you know, the Southern States Energy Board is an interstate compact of 16 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Board members from each state are the Governor, a member of the state Senate and a member of the House of Representatives. In addition, the President appoints a federal representative under public law.

In September 2001, the Southern States Energy Board and the Southern Governor's Association released the report, *Energy Policy in the South*, and presented the document to Vice-President Cheney during our annual meeting. The governors in the southern states recognize that energy policy is important to protecting the quality of life for all citizens. This document recommends an integrated set of actions to address our energy future. Although many decisions on a state by state level are necessary, a regional approach can offer advantages for seeking solutions to achieving the overall goals of energy security, market stability, reliability, infrastructure development, conservation and R & D solutions.

The Southern States Energy Board executive committee would like to discuss several issues with you related to the President's National Energy Plan, the State of the Union address and most recently, the U.S. Department of Energy's FY2003 Budget Rollout. I am particularly interested in addressing the role of regional governors' organizations in implementing the National Energy Plan.

Safeguarding the Nation's nuclear stockpile is a critical component of our homeland security, especially in the southern states. Since the southern governors were insightful during the early 1960's, the states ratified the Southern Interstate Nuclear Compact that subsequently evolved into the Southern States Energy Board. SSEB has worked closely with the states over the past four decades to build a strong, interstate relationship to ensure the safe and reliable management and transportation of nuclear

wastes. Since SSEB administers the Southern Mutual Radiation Assistance Plan (SMRAP), I would like to discuss the importance of this interstate mechanism to provide emergency assistance in the event of a radiological incident.

Utilizing the unique infrastructure and long-standing, interstate relationship that SSEB provides in deploying clean and efficient energy technologies and facilitating market penetration is essential to ensuring energy security. Recent reorganization of some DOE programs suggests that the role of regional organizations in efficiently and effectively implementing the National Energy Plan requires emphasis.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience if your schedule permits meeting with the Southern States Energy Board executive committee. I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,



RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:mtb:kn