

10-27-2010

Celebrating Construction of the MATL (Montana-Alberta Tie Line) Transmission Line (2)

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Recommended Citation

Baucus, Max S., "Celebrating Construction of the MATL (Montana-Alberta Tie Line) Transmission Line (2)" (October 27, 2010).
Max S. Baucus Speeches. 885.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/baucus_speeches/885

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Remarks

I am very pleased to be here to celebrate the construction of the MATL transmission line.

We're here because we believe in the future of Montana's energy potential.

The same harsh winds that our ancestors cursed for scattering seeds and making the landscape difficult to cultivate now hold immense potential as yet another commodity to farm.

Yes, we have the wind, we have the potential – now we need the infrastructure to export it.

This line will be the first to connect electricity from Montana into Alberta and beyond.

This is a new chapter in creating good-paying jobs and securing our energy future.

Each of you here today who have cooperated on the MATL line are part of this exciting effort, and I want to thank you, and congratulate you for your efforts. I would like to say a special thank you to Johan Van't Hof (*Yo-Han Van Hoff*) and John Etchart.

This project has been years in the making.

I remember back in 2007, when the U.S. Department of Energy under the previous Administration was dragging its feet on the project.

I talked and met with Johann (Yo-Hann) several times, and I immediately reached out to DOE Secretary Bodman and told him – we cannot afford to wait in Montana. This needs to move forward now – get moving!

And they did.

I supported MATL's loan application to WAPA for funding under the Recovery Act, and I am very pleased that WAPA chose to select this project for a loan.

This project is a good example of the type of common sense infrastructure investments that will ramp up domestic energy production and help us build a strong wind industry in Montana.

That's why I've supported not only individual projects like MATL, but also tax incentives for renewable energy, such as the Section 45 production credit, which we extended in 2008. And the Section 1603 grant program, which we passed in 2009.

This grant program has really made a difference on the ground. A recent report from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory estimated that as many as 2,400 megawatts of wind power – about $\frac{1}{4}$ of all wind power installed in 2009 – may not have been built last year without the program.

I am hopeful that we will be able to pass an extension of this program before the end of the year.

This national support for wind energy, coupled with transmission investments like MATL, are part of what makes Montana attractive to wind turbine and component manufacturers that will create jobs well into the future.

Just two weeks ago I visited China and met with U.S. and Chinese executives from Goldwind, the 5th largest turbine manufacturer in the world. I explained the exciting things that are happening in Montana and invited them to visit Montana as part of their effort to site a U.S. manufacturing facility. I was thrilled when they accepted, and look forward to working with all of you to demonstrate why Montana is a good place to do business.

With projects like MATL, we can build an energy future that puts America back in control, and we can build a wind energy industry in this state that is a cornerstone of our nation's home-grown, renewable energy future.

Thank you.