Kolevar, Kevin

From: Chip Rodgers [crodgers@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 5:17 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

I am informed that we have no pending official business before the Department of Energy at present.

We look forward to meeting with you on the 23rd.

All best

Chip

--- Original Message ---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [SMTP:Kevin.Kolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:04 PM
To: Chip Rodgers
Subject: RE: Meeting

Sounds good, Chip. Give me a call at 586-8567 and we'll discuss. I'm working to prepare him for Thursday's hearing, so Friday or next week would be best.

Kevin

--- Original Message ---
From: Chip Rodgers [mailto:crodgers@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 3:46 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Subject: Meeting

Kevin -

As you know, energy policy is a critical issue for the commercial real estate industry. Our organization has historically been very active in a number of energy matters affecting commercial property.

As your schedule permits, Roger Platt and I would like to meet with you to compare notes and initiate a dialogue with you and your colleagues about the role of real estate in a national energy strategy.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Many thanks and all best

Chip

Clifton E. Rodgers, Jr.
Vice President
The Real Estate Roundtable
1420 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Telephone: 202.639.0400
Facsimile: 202.639.8442
E-mail: crodgers@rer.org
Mobile: 202.258.1431

22646
DOE024-0052

Obtained and made public by the Natural Resources Defense Council, March/April 2002
From: Chip Rodgers [crodgers@rer.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2001 3:22 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

My colleague Roger Platt asks if there is any way we could reschedule our lunch meeting to Wednesday 3/21. If not, we look forward to meeting with you on 3/23.

Many thanks.

Chip

--- Original Message ---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [SMTP:Kevin.Kolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 5:20 PM
To: 'Chip Rodgers'
Cc: Hutto, Chase
Subject: RE: Meeting

Sounds good, Chip.

Kevin

--- Original Message ---
From: Chip Rodgers [crodgers@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:37 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Cc: Roger Platt
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

Let's shoot for lunch on the Friday, the 23rd. In the meantime, I'll check on the matter we discussed and get back to you.

Many thanks and all best

Chip

--- Original Message ---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [SMTP:Kevin.Kolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:04 PM
To: 'Chip Rodgers'
Subject: RE: Meeting

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Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 3:46 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
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Chip

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Washington, DC 20005

Telephone: 202.639.8400
Facsimile: 202.639.8442
E-mail: crodgers@rer.org
Mobile: 202.258.1431
Website: www.rer.org
To: Kol
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2001 11:31
From: Kol

Thanks Kevin. Let's just stick to the original plan and meet on Friday, 3/23.

We look forward to meeting with you.

All best

Chip

---Original Message---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [mailto:Kolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2001 5:30 PM
To: 'Chip Rodgers'
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

My colleague Roger Platt asks if there is any way we could reschedule our lunch meeting to Wednesday 3/21. If not, we look forward to meeting with you on 3/23.

Many thanks.

Chip

---Original Message---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [mailto:Kolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 5:20 PM
To: 'Chip Rodgers'
Cc: HUD, Chase
Subject: RE: Meeting

Sounds good, Chip.

Kevin

---Original Message---
From: Chip Rodgers [mailto:crogers@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:37 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Cc: Roger Platt
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

Let's shoot for lunch on the Friday, the 23rd. In the meantime, I'll check on the matter we discussed and get back to you.
Many thanks and all best

Chip

---Original Message---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [SMTP:Kevin.Kolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:04 PM
To: 'Chip Rodgers'
Subject: RE: Meeting

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From: Chip Rodgers [mailto:crogers@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 3:46 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Subject: Meeting

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Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202.639.8400
Facsimile: 202.639.8442
E-mail: crogers@rer.org
Mobile: 202.258.1431
Website: www.rer.org
From: Keliiher, Joseph  
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2001 6:41 PM  
To: Kolevar, Kevin  
Subject: meeting

A friend is bringing in a group of folks tomorrow at 10am who want to argue that the national energy policy should include a multipollutant bill. Can you join us?
Kolevar, Kevin

From: Chip Rodgers [croddgers@rer.org]
Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2001 4:37 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

In the interest of zeroing in on a place to meet Friday, we were thinking 701 Pennsylvania may be convenient for both of you. If that does not sound good, perhaps Oceanaire (1201 F Street) would be an option.

In any event we look forward to seeing you guys - perhaps 12:00 noon?

All best

Chip

---Original Message---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [SMTP:KeviKolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2001 5:30 PM
To: Chip Rodgers
Subject: RE: Meeting

Chip. Wednesday does not work for us. You want to try for another day?

Kevin

---Original Message---
From: Chip Rodgers [mailto:croddgers@rer.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2001 3:22 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

My colleague Roger Platt asks if there is any way we could reschedule our lunch meeting to Wednesday 3/21. If not, we look forward to meeting with you on 3/23.

Many thanks.

Chip

---Original Message---
From: Kolevar, Kevin [SMTP:KeviKolevar@hq.doe.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 5:20 PM
To: Chip Rodgers
Cc: Hino, Chase
Subject: RE: Meeting

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Kevin

---Original Message---
From: Chip Rodgers [mailto:croddgers@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:37 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
Cc: Roger Platt
Subject: RE: Meeting

Kevin -

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Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 4:04 PM
To: 'Chip Rodgers'
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From: Chip Rodgers [mailto:crodgerr@rer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2001 3:46 PM
To: Kolevar, Kevin
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Facsimile: 202.639.8442
E-mail: crodgerr@rer.org
Mobile: 202.258.1431
Website: www.rer.org

Obtained and made public by the Natural Resources Defense Council, March/April 2002
To: Buddy Garland/EE/DOE@DOE, MaryBeth Zimmerman/EE/DOE@DOE, Roxanne Danz/SMTP/NRELExchange, Joseph Malinovsky/EE/DOE@DOE, Randy Steer/EE/DOE@DOE
cc:

Subject: NEP Report Outline and Draft Guidance for discussion tomorrow am

As attached:

Sam

NEPReviewDraftGuida
To: Buddy Garland/EE/DOE@DOE, MaryBeth Zimmerman/EE/DOE@DOE, R Danz/EE/DOE@DOE, Joseph Molinovsky/EE/DOE@DOE, Randy Siser/EE/DOE@DOE
cc: 

Subject: NEP Guidance

One quick correction with an appendix added for public meeting input.

Sam

NEPReviewDraftGuida
To: MSHAPIRO43@cs.com
cc: Buddy Garland/EE/DOE@DOE, MaryBeth Zimmerman/EE/DOE/DOE, brian.connor@ee.doe.gov, Keller Staley/EE/DOE@DOE

Subject: Re: Program Evaluation Schedule

Buddy, Keller and I, will meet on the schedule and the support required to pull all this off. Once we have the integrated plan complete I will need you, MaryBeth, Brian and I, to have a sit down to begin the process of planning the strategic planning phase. The sooner the better. Once we are well on our way with the program reviews, you and Brian can begin the process of getting us ready for the Fall meeting. MaryBeth will have the lead on the plan’s development and I view you as the critical support. Clearly, Dave, Abe and I will be all over this one as well. But remember, everything we are doing culminates in a new EERE strategic plan. That is the real end product.

MSHAPIRO43@cs.com on 05/30/2001 10:24:15 AM

---

MSHAPIRO43@cs.com on 05/30/2001 10:24:15 AM

---

To: John Sullivan/EE/DOE@DOE
cc: Keller Staley/EE/DOE@DOE

Subject: Program Evaluation Schedule

John,

Attached is a WordPerfect file with a draft schedule for the Public Forums, Program Evaluations, and Strategic Plan. Let me know if the "rock" is reasonable. Also, who else in EERE would you like me to be working with on this? Thanks.

---Michael

- att1.htm
- NEP ProgRev Sched053001.wpd

---

Obtained and made public by the Natural Resources Defense Council, March/April 2002
This report relates to a message you sent with the following header fields:

Message-id: <171050CA40613-02@Department_of_Energy_e-Mail_Security_Server>
Date: Fri, 25 May 2001 12:51:59 -0400
From: MaryBeth.Zimmerman@DOE.gov
To: Philip.Patterson@ee.doe.gov, Noel.Cole@ee.doe.gov,
Kenneth.Friedman@ee.doe.gov, Peggy.Podolak@ee.doe.gov,
Tina.Kaarsberg@ee.doe.gov, Patrick.Booker@ee.doe.gov, Jerry.Dion@ee.doe.gov,
Thomas.Heavey@ee.doe.gov, Tanya.Sadler@ee.doe.gov, Ellyn.Krevitz@ee.doe.gov
Subject: Reminder: Performance Measure/Benefits Estimation mtgs.

Your message cannot be delivered to the following recipients:

Recipient address: shapiro@eharnar.com
Reason: translated to illegal address: SHAPIRO@InfoAve.Net
Reason translated address failed: user disabled; cannot receive new mail

Return-path: <MaryBeth.Zimmerman@ee.doe.gov>
Received: from DIRECTORY-DARMON by InfoAve.Net (PMDF V5.2-33 #45320) id
<01J32C155TCMG218@InfoAve.Net>; Fri, 25 May 2001 12:52:39 EDT
Received: from hqss.hr.doe.gov ([146.138.1.107]) by InfoAve.Net (PMDF V5.2-33 #45320)
with SMTP id <01J32H716MQZSN@InfoAve.Net> for shapiro@eharnar.com; Fri, 25 May
2001 12:52:23 EDT
Received: from 146.138.25.148 by hqss.hr.doe.gov with SMTP (Dept. of Energy SMTP
Relay (PMDF V4.7)); Fri, 25 May 2001 12:58:41 -0400
Received: by eelnsmtp.ee.doe.gov[Lotus SMTP MTA V4.6.7 (934.1 12-30-1999 )] id
05256A57.005C97E3 ; Fri, 25 May 2001 12:51:21 -0400
Date: Fri, 25 May 2001 12:51:59 -0400
From: MaryBeth.Zimmerman@ee.doe.gov
Subject: Reminder: Performance Measure/Benefits Estimation mtgs.
To: Philip.Patterson@ee.doe.gov, Noel.Cole@ee.doe.gov,
Kenneth.Friedman@ee.doe.gov, Peggy.Podolak@ee.doe.gov, Tina.Kaarsberg@ee.doe.gov,
Patrick.Booker@ee.doe.gov, Jerry.Dion@ee.doe.gov, Thomas.Heavey@ee.doe.gov,
Tanya.Sadler@ee.doe.gov, Ellyn.Krevitz@ee.doe.gov
cc: Sam.Baldwin@ee.doe.gov, Randy.Steer@ee.doe.gov, Nancy.Jeffery@ee.doe.gov,
Buddy.Garland@ee.doe.gov, John.Sullivan@ee.doe.gov, Darrell.Beschen@ee.doe.gov,
Michael.York@ee.doe.gov, Phillip.Tseng@ee.doe.gov, Abe.Haspel@ee.doe.gov,
To: Joel Rubin
cc: 

Subject: BTS Anecdotes for NEP

this is the buildings stuff electronically, plus another one specific model story is coming from gail....d.

--- Forwarded by Darrell Beschen/EE/DOE on 02/15/2001 04:36 PM ---

Jerry Dion

02/15/2001 03:45 PM

To: Darrell Beschen/EE/DOE@DOE
cc: 

Subject: BTS Anecdotes for NEP

Darrell,

Here are files from me and Andrew Nicholls. I'm going through hard copy with a highlighter and will get you what I have by about 4:40. Gail McKinley will also have stuff - I hope to have it before I get the highlighted hard copy to you.

Jerry Dion
California State University Chancellor Charles B. Reed gave trustees an update today on energy conservation efforts that are being undertaken in the wake of the power crisis. "Long before the current energy crisis, the California State University had a history of taking great efforts to minimize energy use and implement conservation programs," Reed said. "Now it is even more important to maintain and expand those programs and seek new ways to save energy."

The system has 370,000 students and 40,000 faculty and staff on 23 campuses and five off-campus centers throughout the state. Five university campuses are located in the greater Bay area alone. Altogether the schools rack up a $50 million annual electric bill and a 600 million kilowatt-per-hour annual consumption. Over the past 20 years, the CSU system has implemented energy saving programs that have saved a cumulative 123 million kilowatt hours beyond minimum state code requirements. In addition to those programs, the state university system has taken several steps to respond to the recent energy crisis. They include the following:

-- The chancellor requested that all campuses set thermostats to 68 degrees;

-- The CSU system has received $7.6 million from the legislature and the Public Utilities Commission to implement energy savings projects that will save 8.3 megawatts by summer 2001; -- Officials have submitted a list of an additional $184.7 million in distributed generation and demand reduction projects that could save another 93 megawatts starting in summer 2002; and -- The system has been actively participating in shedding loads of energy during electrical emergencies in response to the governor's directive.

In addition, several ongoing programs are saving the state university system millions of dollars in energy costs. Since 1979, the CSU systemwide energy conservation program has also sought funding to include energy efficient equipment in capital improvement projects. Campuses have also installed energy management systems, lighting and mechanical improvements, energy efficient roofs, heating and air conditioning upgrades and cogeneration facilities. Two years ago, the CSU and the University of California systems launched a four-year agreement with Enron Energy Services, through which Enron became the sole provider of electricity for most of the CSU and UC campuses. In return, both institutions have benefited from a reduced and fixed rate that so far has saved CSU an estimated total of about $6.3 million.
State Survey Shows Energy Becoming Priority

By KPIX - BCN

A survey released today shows that Californians increasingly worry that the current electricity crisis will damage the economy in the state's coming years.

According to the study by the Public Policy Institute of California, 92 percent of those questioned consider the power crunch a problem and 74 percent call it a "big problem." Only 51 percent believe the good economic times will continue to roll in the Golden state, compared with 72 percent who felt that way just five months ago.

So far, Californians are blaming deregulation (47 percent) or electric companies (25 percent) rather than pointing fingers at the governor or legislature (a combined 19 percent), according to Mark Baldassare of the San Francisco-based group. But he predicted the crisis could create fallout for elected officials in the future. State residents continued to rank education as a major concern, survey takers note, with 52 percent stating it is a "big problem." Just under one-third responded that the situation for public schools seems to be improving during the past two years. The survey, part of the institute's attempt to profile political forces affecting the state, questioned 2,011 adults between Jan. 2 and Jan. 8 via telephone. Its sampling error rate is plus or minus 2.5 percent.
Wednesday January 17 11:04 AM ET
California's Bright Economic Lights Flicker

By Michael Kahn

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Could the lights be dimming on high-tech Silicon Valley and the booming California economy?

The nation's most populous state has been basking in unprecedented prosperity as Internet and other high-tech workers struck gold with skyrocketing stock prices. But the once-bright prospects have begun to flicker under the strain of the dot-com crash and severe energy crisis that threaten California's economy, the world's sixth-largest.

"I do not expect people to be selling apples on the streets of San Jose, but the day is over when a dot-com receptionist can ride stock options to riches," Nobel Prize-winning economist Daniel McFadden, of the University of California at Berkeley, said recently.

For the past few years, the so-called wealth effect from high-flying stock prices and a seemingly unshakable belief in the New Economy fueled California's economic boom. Income soared, the high-tech economy churned out jobs at record rates and many believed the good times could roll on indefinitely.

Better yet, venture capital firms poured billions of dollars into Silicon Valley startups, while dot-commers with stock option cash used their riches to snap up expensive homes and cars, creating even more wealth in a frenzy of consumer spending.

For many dot-commers, the day of reckoning has come. Venture capital firms have scaled back investment in Silicon Valley, while the euphoria at Internet startups has given way to the harsh reality of layoffs and plunging stock prices.

"It is no longer anything Internet is going to make money," said Sheeraz Haji, co-founder of LocusFocus, an Internet startup that allows nonprofits to communicate with their members. "There was a bandwagon atmosphere like, 'If I get into an Internet company, I'm going to be rich.'"

As the economy grinds down, with Internet firms feeling the pinch, many workers are scurrying back to the relative safety of more traditional jobs in consulting and banking, Haji said.

Tom Lieser, author of a widely watched survey of the state's economy for the Anderson School at the University of California in Los Angeles, said the high-tech boom laid a good foundation for California's future -- even if a slowdown is
It Won't Be As Easy To Get Another Job'

But he said the explosive growth California has seen in the past few years, due largely to the high-tech sector, could not last forever. Income levels grew at a whopping 11 percent in 2000 but will plummet to around 4 percent in 2001, he said.

"You just can't maintain that kind of exceptional income and spending growth," Liesen said in an interview. "It won't be as easy to walk across the street and get another job as it was."

Other economists agreed.

"I don't see a recession in California, but certainly a slowdown," said economist Tapan Munroe, head of an energy and economic research firm. "I think it will do better than the national average because of the head start we have had in the last several years in the tremendous growth of high-tech and information economy."

Ted Gibson, the state's chief economist, remains bullish, saying the Federal Reserve (news - web sites)'s recent decision to cut interest rates would be enough to spur income and job growth later in the year. "We don't buy the recession story," he said. "We expect a soft landing and then the economy will take off again."

But economist Munroe sees dark clouds gathering on the horizon. Even though he believes California should sail through 2001, he says the longer-term future is unclear.

Continued dot-com problems, sliding stock prices and a severe energy crisis provide the ingredients for a worsening business climate, which could spur firms to freeze expansion and locate jobs to other states, Munroe said, describing his prognosis as "sort of guarded optimism, because we have a lot of signs of growing problems in the state."

The biggest worry now is the growing power crisis, which could pull the plug on the state's economy unless lawmakers find ways to ensure long-term electricity sources, he added.

California residents have been facing the possibility of rolling blackouts due to tight supplies of electricity.

To meet demand, utilities have been forced to pay rocketing prices for wholesale electricity on the spot market, pushing the state's two biggest utilities to the brink of bankruptcy because they have not been able to raise rates to offset their costs due to a rate freeze in effect under a 1996 deregulation law.
The energy crunch is especially worrying for Silicon Valley, which relies on a steady supply of power, Munroe said, adding the uncertainty over power could spur firms to expand in other states or move jobs elsewhere.

"If we don't solve the energy crunch we will have a serious situation on our hands," he said. "If you don't have a reliable energy supply that is a problem for high-tech companies."
Report from the state offices show that so far this year the number of households seeking help has increased by 1.1 million, a 26 percent jump over last winter. In some states the number of applicants has nearly doubled and is likely to go still higher, officials said.

The federal government has distributed $2.26 billion to the states for heating assistance, and money is available, Wolfe said. But he expressed concern that the state assistance funds will run dry in the weeks ahead as families begin getting their January and February heating bills.

"We're talking about elderly, or disabled people, or a family with young children, usually making less than $10,000 per year," said Wolfe, director of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association. "We're trying to encourage people to apply. We don't want people not to buy medicine or food to pay for heat."

Residential prices for natural gas, home heating oil and propane have jumped by 40 percent to as much as double what they were last year. In some regions high electricity prices also have added to heating bills.

Wolfe said information supplied by state offices to his Washington-based association shows that so far this year 4.9 million households have requested assistance and are in the pipeline to get money from the federal fund.

In response to an association survey, state officials across the country from Maine to Oregon and from Georgia and Florida to New Mexico expressed concern that they won't have enough money to meet the needs of poor families, some being forced to choose between food and heat.

"At current rate of demand the state expects to be out of funds by the end of March," wrote an official from the Florida assistance office, worried about getting people through the winter and then helping people this summer meet air conditioning costs.
In Iowa, state officials reported that the average natural gas bill for home heating was expected this year to be $807, compared with $354 a year ago. The number of households that have sought help in the state has increased by 21 percent this winter to 62,000.

When the Iowa office asked elderly applicants what they do when they can't pay for heat, one in five "reported going without needed medical care or prescription drugs to pay heating bills," the office reported.

Maine reported receiving 65,000 requests for assistance, but 7,000 of them have been turned down because no money is available, according to the state's survey response. Like many other states, the Maine office is using money earmarked for weatherization and furnace repairs to meet the more immediate bill-paying needs.

Some of the sharpest increase in the number of applicants has come in states where winter heating bills normally are not a problem, such as Georgia, with 120,000 household requests, and Louisiana, with 92,100, both double from a year ago. The number of applicants jumped by 80 percent to nearly 90,000 in Oregon, where electricity bills have soared in recent weeks and many homes have electric heat.

States with more than 150,000 households applying for assistance were New York, with 818,000; Michigan, 362,000; Illinois, 350,000; Pennsylvania, 280,750; Ohio, 224,700; North Carolina, 151,000; and New Jersey, 150,000.

Congress last year increased the amount of federal low-income energy assistance money from $1.4 billion to $2.26 billion, and some lawmakers have said additional money will have to be provided to make it through Oct. 1, the end of the fiscal year.

Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota on Wednesday called for a boost in spending for the assistance program. His state reported a 30 percent increase in applicants for assistance, about 15,000 families.

Various states have different criteria for eligibility. Some states provide for anyone whose income is 150 percent of the poverty level or 60 percent of the median income in the state. Most states have eased eligibility requirements this winter because of the jump in heating costs.

In some cases families with incomes of up to $40,000 a year may be eligible, but most of the applicants are from households earning less than $10,000 a year, said Wolfe.

The average assistance is $350, but many states reported higher amounts up to $1,200 in some cases. The Energy Department estimates the typical heating costs for households using oil or natural this winter will be close to $1,000 for the winter.
New Orleans residents angry over high utility bills converged on the steps of City Hall Wednesday morning, demanding attention from a council committee meeting going on inside.

Citizens for Change say that the bite of high bills still hurts and they want action. The group wants the council to lower the city gate fees -- the extra charge on local utility bills that allows Entergy to recover the extra cost of natural gas. The group says that Entergy saw the increased energy costs coming, but did nothing to prepare. "Entergy is a regulated monopoly," said protester Gary Groesch. "They're in business to help the community, and in fact, they are crushing the community under all these excess costs."

City Council was meeting in committee Wednesday to hear those complaints and to hear from Entergy.
WASHINGTON (AP) - As if low crop prices weren't tough enough, the nation's farm economy is now being battered by soaring costs for energy and fertilizer, Congress was told Tuesday. Net farm income is likely to drop 20 percent, or $9 billion, over the next two years unless there is a fresh outpouring of federal aid, according to the congressionally funded Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, based at the University of Missouri. The cost of fuel that farmers need for tractors, combines and irrigation equipment jumped 31 percent last year. Prices may drop slightly in coming months, but growers are expected to be hit this year with a 33 percent increase in fertilizer costs, the report said. Nitrogen fertilizer is made from natural gas.

"It's not only low prices, it's high production costs that are squeezing farmers," said Bruce Babcock, an Iowa State University economist. Nebraska farmer Keith Dittrich said he expects to pay about $67 an acre to irrigate his corn this year, compared to $37 an acre in 2000. Fertilizer costs are running $40 an acre, up from $25 last year. Meanwhile, the price of corn has averaged under $2 a bushel without a significant increase for several years. "You keep looking for ways to find better efficiencies in your operation, but there's a limit to that," Dittrich said. "It's to the point where there is no place to cut."

The financial squeeze isn't just in the Midwest. Cotton farms in California and Texas that rely heavily on irrigation are likely to be among the hardest hit over the next few years, according to an analysis by Texas A&M University. Rice farms of all sizes are likely to lose money, too. Wheat and soybean farmers, whose fertilizer and fuel costs are generally lower, would do a little better. A 2,000-acre cotton farm in California is expected to have $1.05 in costs for every $1 in income over the next five years. Cattle producers are in the best shape, in part because of rising beef consumption and the low grain prices, which result in lower feed costs. Crop prices plummeted in the late 1990s because of lagging exports and heavy worldwide production, and Congress responded by passing multibillion-dollar packages of supplemental assistance in each of the past three years. Last year, farmers received $8 billion in emergency aid.

Lawmakers are virtually certain to pass another large bailout this year, and they're starting hearings this month on a long-term overhaul of farm policy that includes proposals for a new system for subsidizing growers when crop income is down. Sen. Pat Roberts (news - bio - voting record), R-Kan., warned recently that farmers faced a "economic and energy powder keg" because of the rising production costs. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman has endorsed the idea of another emergency aid package this year but hasn't said how much money will be needed.

The report released Tuesday estimates net farm income will drop from $45.4 billion last year to $39.6 billion in 2001 and $36.3 billion in 2002 before starting to turn around in the following years as commodity prices rise. Farm income peaked at $55 billion in 1996. Government payments have been soaring since then, topping $22 billion last year, triple what they were in

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1996. "What the payments have done is help them (farmers) maintain their position," said James Richardson, a Texas A&M economist. "Some have lost ground but most have maintained their position." Roberts and other farm state lawmakers also want to protect farmers from more taxes. At issue are conflicting court rulings over whether farmers must pay self-employment taxes on income from the federal Conservation Reserve Program, which distributes $1.4 billion to more than 290,000 farmers who take environmentally sensitive acreage out of production. "Now is not the time to add another tax burden on our struggling farmers," said Roberts, one of several sponsors of a measure blocking the additional taxes.

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