

World Leaders Focus on Renewable Energy, Climate Change

Tracy Wingenroth and John Nikoloff, partners in PA-ERG, joined world leaders gathered this week to highlight the challenges and opportunities confronting the growth of renewable energy, at the Washington Renewable International Energy Conference (WIREC) in Washington, DC. More than 7,000 delegates from 137 countries participated.



While in Washington, ERG's partners met with biofuels, waste to energy, advanced technology and hydrogen company representatives, and with Pennsylvania state officials who were in attendance. "The breadth and depth of delegates at the meeting speaks strongly for the future of renewable energy," Wingenroth said. "We were very pleased to be able to meet with so many companies and organizations who are serious about investing in this future in Pennsylvania."

Four Pennsylvania organizations were among the hundreds of international exhibitors at the WIREC 2008 Trade Show. Fribrowatt, LLC, of Newtown, Bucks County, is a developer, builder and operator of electrical power plants fueled by poultry litter and other agricultural biomass. Lake Erie Biofuels, in Erie, is a leading provider of biodiesel to independent petroleum distributors in the Northeastern US. Mid-Atlantic Grid Interactive Cars, of Norristown, is a working consortium focused on demonstration and standardization of Electric Vehicle to Grid (V2G) architectures. And Penn State University was at the show exhibiting its interdisciplinary approach to challenges in alternative fuels, solar energy, wind power, biomass production and utilization.

Speakers at the conference were unanimous in their assessment of the future. "Many of the forecasts are wrong. My forecast is probably wrong," said Sun Microsystems founder and renewable energy investor Vinod Khosla as he talked about the potential for technologies that none of us can currently predict. "Today's unimaginable is tomorrow's conventional wisdom,"

During the conference, President Bush addressed the delegates (see story below), touting the potential for biodiesel in the US and across the globe. Dan Arvizu, Director of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, CO., proposed three initiatives to capitalize on global research and development collaboration, including working together to evaluate life-cycle costs and emissions from renewable energy technologies compared to conventional options; pursuing partnerships between research institutes; and creating a global alliance of renewable energy research institutions that share information on programs and results, coordinate global initiatives and serve as centers of excellence for building research capacity around the world.

During the conference, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Ed Schafer and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Samuel Bodman announced that combined, USDA and DOE will invest up to \$18.4 million, over three years, for 21 biomass research and development (R&D), and demonstration projects. These projects aim to address critical barriers to making production of biomass more efficient and cost-effective.

Also See: [President Bush Attends Washington International Renewable Energy Conference 2008](#)