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The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
SH-511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2602

Dear Senator Baucus:

As you work to draft and debate legislation to address the nation’s energy and climate change policy needs and goals, it is critical that all technologies be provided with the opportunity to contribute to our nation’s energy security, reduce carbon emissions, and compliment environmentally responsible practices. Therefore, we urge you to include the recovery of energy from the controlled combustion of municipal solid waste (MSW), also called Waste to Energy (WTE), as part of any national Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that may be adopted in energy and climate change legislation.

Founded in 1880, ASME is a 127,000-member professional organization focused on technical, educational and research issues of the engineering community. Since 1961, the objective of the ASME Solid Waste Processing Division is to collect, correlate, and disseminate accurate information on all aspects of the solid waste processing industry.

Waste-to-energy currently processes over 29 million tons of waste a year in the United States, generating over 2.6 gigawatts of electricity from 87 facilities. Right now in this nation, WTE is providing reliable energy and avoiding landfill use, while reducing the carbon footprint by nearly one third compared to fossil energy. Despite this progress, over 225 million tons of waste is still being shipped into landfills every year in the U.S.; we are literally discarding the opportunity to double or triple our electricity generated from WTE. The inclusion of this technology as an alternative to landfills, and as a part of a RPS could prove critical to our nation’s energy future.

Thank you for your consideration of including WTE as a part of any national Renewable Portfolio Standard. The ASME Solid Waste Processing Division recently released a detailed position statement on Waste to Energy prospects and technology that has been included with this letter. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact ASME Government Relations Representative Robert Rains at Rainsr@asme.org or at 202/785-7483.

Sincerely,

John W. Norton, PE
Chair, ASME Solid Waste Processing Division (SWPD)

This letter represents the views of the Solid Waste Processing Division of ASME’s Technical Divisions and is not necessarily a position of ASME as a whole.