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Washington, Feb 7 - Today, Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) introduced a bill to boost wind energy production in Iowa and the United States.

Braley's Clean Energy Investment Act of 2008 would extend the Wind Energy Production Tax Credit for seven years, providing wind energy producers with the incentive to expand production of wind energy.

"Iowa has the potential to be the wind energy capital of the Midwest," Braley said. "Wind energy is good for the economy, good for the environment, and good for farmers. That's why we need to do more to encourage the development of Iowa's wind energy industry."

"My bill will help boost the wind energy industry in Iowa by extending the wind energy tax credit for seven years. This will create stability and predictability in the wind energy marketplace so wind energy producers can invest more freely in production and the latest technology."

Iowa's wind energy production currently ranks fourth in the nation. However, Iowa has a great untapped capacity to expand wind energy production: according to the American Wind Energy Association, Iowa could produce over 62,000 megawatts of wind-generated electricity, but is currently producing only 1,273 megawatts (one megawatt can power about 250 homes).

First established in 1992, the Wind Energy Production Tax Credit allows a credit against income taxes for producers of wind energy. The credit is currently set at 2 cents per kilowatt hour. (A coal plant can produce electricity at about 5.4 cents per kWh, and a wind farm at about 7.6 cents per kWh. Thus, a 2 cent per kWh credit helps make wind competitive with conventional production.) Without Congressional action, the Wind Energy Production Tax Credit will expire on January 1, 2009.

Historically, the credit has been extended in one- and two-year increments. This approach, however, makes it difficult for producers to predict the nature of the wind energy marketplace since there is no guarantee that Congress will extend the tax credit.

Braley's Clean Energy Investment Act of 2008 would extend the Wind Energy Production Tax Credit for seven years, to January 1, 2016. This would provide producers and investors with a more stable market, which should spur greater investment in wind energy.