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RE: Support **HB 273 Certain Natural Gas as Renewable Energy**

Mr./Madame Chair and Committee Members:

Better Together New Mexico (BTNM) brings together hundreds of advocacy groups and thousands of New Mexicans statewide. Our mission is to unite New Mexicans through grassroots initiatives and work to positively shape the decisions that affect our lives, families, and communities.

BTNM supports HB 273 Certain Natural Gas as Renewable Energy for the following reasons:

Diversification of Renewable Energy Portfolio: By including natural gas using combined cycle technology as a renewable energy resource, HB 273 allows for a broader, more diversified energy mix. This diversification can lead to more stable energy prices for businesses, reduce reliance on less predictable renewable sources, and enhance the resilience of the energy grid.

Increased Business Flexibility: The amendment to define combined cycle natural gas as a renewable resource gives energy producers and utilities more options to meet renewable energy mandates. This flexibility can be crucial for businesses in planning and investing in energy infrastructure, ensuring they can adapt to regulatory requirements without compromising on economic viability.

Support for Local Industry and Jobs: Recognizing combined cycle technology as renewable could stimulate investment in natural gas infrastructure and technology within New Mexico, supporting local jobs, particularly in the rural areas served by electric cooperatives. This investment can lead to economic growth and job creation in the energy sector.

Encouragement of Efficient Energy Technologies: Combined cycle technology is known for its efficiency, converting more of the fuel's energy into electricity. By incentivizing its use through renewable energy classification, HB 273 encourages the adoption of high-efficiency practices, which can lower operational costs for businesses and reduce environmental impact.

Meeting Renewable Energy Goals: This bill aligns with New Mexico's renewable energy objectives by recognizing that not all renewable energy must come from traditionally defined sources. It provides a pathway for incremental progress towards sustainability goals without the immediate need for extensive new renewable installations, thus balancing environmental and economic considerations.

We urge your support for HB 273 as it presents a pragmatic approach to renewable energy policy that benefits the business community and the environment.

Thank you for considering my comments,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carla J. Sonntag', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carla J. Sonntag
President and CEO