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## VIEWPOINT: Energy bill fuels future of state

In his first eight months in office, North Dakota Public Service Commissioner Brian Kalk has waged an aggressive campaign against proposed federal comprehensive energy legislation, which will cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and increase national security, all while creating 1.7 million new clean-energy jobs ("Cap, trade bill is not energy bill," Page D3, Aug. 30).

By: **Carmen Miller**, Bismarck

**BISMARCK** — In his first eight months in office, North Dakota Public Service Commissioner Brian Kalk has waged an aggressive campaign against proposed federal comprehensive energy legislation, which will cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and increase national security, all while creating 1.7 million new clean-energy jobs ("Cap, trade bill is not energy bill," Page D3, Aug. 30).

Most disturbing is that Kalk doesn't appear to have read the proposed legislation. Even a minimal review would show the commissioner that all of the items on his national energy policy "checklist" are included in the House bill to which he refers. Let me explain.

First, the bill passed by the House in June is not called "cap and trade," as Kalk suggests. It is the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. Only one of the bill's five titles addresses the reduction of greenhouse gases, while the other titles address a variety of this nation's energy issues (and opportunities), including energy efficiency, renewable energy, advanced coal technologies, transmission and transportation.

Ironically, the bill Kalk opposes delivers exactly what he claims to support:

— Validation that fossil fuels are here to stay. See Title I, Subtitle B, which provides incentives for the development of carbon capture and sequestration. This absolutely anticipates a future for coal.

— Renewable energy goals. See Title I, Subtitle A, which clearly establishes a gradually increasing renewable energy requirement for retail electric suppliers.

— Demand-side management/conservation. See Title II, Energy Efficiency. When we reduce energy consumption in our homes through improved building materials, more efficient lighting and appliances, conservation will not impact our quality of life but will become a natural part of it.

— Intelligent regulation. The American Clean Energy and Security Act is comprehensive energy legislation that takes an economywide approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency, improved transportation and technological advances combined with specific, targeted emissions reductions from the largest U.S. polluters.

Through these efforts, we will gradually, and sensibly, transition to a clean energy economy over the next 40 years.

— Adequate funding for research and development. See Title I, Subtitle B (Carbon Capture and Sequestration); Subtitle C (Clean Transportation); Subtitle F (Transmission Planning); Subtitle H (Energy and Efficiency Centers and Research); and Subtitle I (Nuclear and Advanced Technologies).

In truth, research and development funding provisions of the bill are almost too numerous to list.

Why is Kalk so determined to paint North Dakota as the victim in this process, when in fact, we may well be the victors?

Between clean-coal technologies, renewable energy development, and agriculture, there are great opportunities for North Dakota under this legislation. We know that North Dakota is the "Saudi Arabia of wind," but we could be the Silicon Valley of the new clean-energy economy.

Kalk is new to state government but quickly will learn that North Dakota voters expect their elected officials to do their homework on issues as important as these.

*Miller is North Dakota state director for Clean Energy Works.*

**Tags:** op-ed columns, energy bill, american clean energy and security act of 2009, brian kalk, clean energy works, opinion, viewpoint