

Yale's Environmental Protection Clinic Sends Investigators to Chile

SANTIAGO, Chile, 01/27/2015 - To support Futaleufú Riverkeeper and other organizations working for a cleaner energy future, investigators from Yale Law School's Environmental Protection Clinic flew to Chile this month to present studies on new ways for promoting non-conventional renewable energies. The investigators, who are completing post-graduate degrees at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, spent three weeks in Chile meeting with government officials, private sector leaders, NGOs, and local stakeholders in the Futaleufú valley, located in the Los Lagos region in northern Patagonia. In Santiago, they presented their findings to officials at the National Energy Commission and the Ministries of Energy, Interior, Foreign Relations, and Agriculture. The visit also coincided with the annual dinner for the Chilean Association of Renewable Energy (ACERA), during which ACERA's director Carlos Finat thanked the researchers for helping to promote non-conventional renewable energies.

Chief among the researcher's findings was the need for Chile to create new incentives for promoting non-conventional renewables, based on lessons learned from a review of case studies from around the world. Some of the main research findings are as follows:

- Government funding for renewable development is most crucial at the riskiest phases of the project, typically in the exploration and initial development phases.
- Funding and training for operation and maintenance must be included in project planning to ensure continued use of renewable energy sources.
- Chile should incorporate favorable interconnection policies, incentive programs, workforce training and effective consumer outreach campaigns into its distributed generation policy.
- Maintaining transparency and consistency throughout the policy formulation process is critical.
- Any incentive program should utilize a declining incentive structure.

The researchers also highlighted the potential for renewable energies as a component of eco-tourism in areas like Patagonia, renowned for its natural beauty and eco-conscious visitors.

Futaleufú Riverkeeper's International Director, American attorney Patrick J. Lynch, spoke about the benefits of the research provided by the investigators from Yale University, one of the world's premier research institutions. "Having Yale researchers come to Chile is a big step for showing how we do not need large dams in the country. The researcher's findings - that isolated regions can implement ambitious renewable energy policies without building large dams or transmission lines, and that distributed generation in existing energy grids can promote adoption of renewables and democratize the process by which people obtain energy in their daily lives - are very important for a country like Chile to consider as it develops a national energy policy."

To access a summary of the findings, please visit www.futaleufuriverkeeper.org

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