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Cleantech Industry Should Get Boost From Wal-Mart Initiative

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Himanshu Pandya submits: It seems like Wal-Mart ([WMT](#)) is all set to jump on the solar and alternative energy bandwagon. The company has supposedly sent out Request for Proposals [RFP] to install solar panels in its stores. Joel Makower has read the confidential RFP and has the [details on his blog](#).

I am really caught off-guard by this story since **the company involved is Wal-Mart and not a Silicon Valley Tech company.**

.... Microsoft ([MSFT](#)) and Google ([GOOG](#)) have installed solar panels at their respective headquarters but the size of the Wal-Mart campaign is huge and could shift the alternative energy industry into another gear in America.

Wal-Mart already has [a store in Dallas, Texas](#) equipped with solar panels, wind turbine and a bio-fuel boilers to recycle and burn recovered oil from store operations.

If other retailers catch on to this idea and start implementing even some sustainable practices, then the alternative energy industry could enjoy a tremendous boom in the coming years.

Following is an excerpt from a Wal-Mart memo presented by CEO and President H. Lee Scott:

Wal-Mart can help restore balance to climate systems, reduce greenhouse gases, save money for our customers, and reduce dependence on oil, and we are committed to the following:

1. Aggressively investing approximately \$500 million annually in technologies and innovation to do the following:
 - o Reducing greenhouse gases at our existing store, club and DC base around the world by 20 percent over the next 7 years.
 - o Designing and opening a viable prototype that is 25–30 percent more efficient and will produce up to 30 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions within the next 4 years.
 - o Increasing our fleet efficiency by 25 percent in the next 3 years, and doubling efficiency in the next 10 years.
 - o Sharing all learnings in technology with the world, including our competitors (the more people who can utilize this type of technology the larger the market and more we can save our customers).
2. Aggressively pursuing regulatory and policy change that will create incentives for utilities to invest in energy efficiency and low or no greenhouse gas sources of electricity, and to reduce barriers to integrating these sources into the power grid.
3. Assisting in the design and support of a green company program in China, where Wal-Mart would show preference to those suppliers and their factories involved in such a program.
4. Initiating a program here in the U.S. over the next 18 months that would show preference to suppliers who set their own goals and aggressively reduce their own emissions.

One way to play the potential upside from such an initiative would be in the form of the PowerShares WilderHill Clean Energy ETF ([PBW](#)) and the PowerShares WilderHill Prog Energy ETF ([PUW](#)).

PBW 1-yr chart:



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