

House Approves Critical Investment in Solar Technology

Legislation crafted by Congressman Rothman and the Science and Technology Committee authorizes millions of dollars for clean energy research

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(Washington, DC) — Yesterday, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted in favor of H.R. 3585, the Solar Technology Roadmap Act of 2009. The measure, which passed in the House by a vote of 310 to 106, was co-authored by Rep. Rothman, who advocated for the bill's passage as a member of the House Science and Technology Committee. H.R. 3585 will guide federal investment for solar technology research, development and demonstration.

"Investing in solar technology provides our nation with a long-term strategy to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil and helps us combat climate change, while creating new, clean energy jobs to strengthen America's economy," said Rothman. "This bill will be pivotal in bolstering the solar technology industry in New Jersey, and I am proud to have worked with my fellow committee members in crafting and successfully passing H.R. 3585."

Over the last several years, New Jersey's investment in solar technology has taken off, moving from virtually zero solar installations to over 4,000 in just over five years, with over 200 solar companies established in New Jersey. The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities recently announced that New Jersey now has over 100 megawatts of solar capacity and more than 4,340 solar projects statewide. These ground-breaking achievements are the latest examples of New Jersey's renewable energy leadership and commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"New Jersey is poised to take full advantage of the economic opportunities the Roadmap will offer to our booming solar technology industry," said Rothman. "With the assistance of this legislation, New Jersey will help America emerge as a global leader in this field."

The Solar Technology Roadmap Act will:

- Establish a Roadmap Committee - This legislation requires the Secretary of Energy to select a group of experts from industry, academia and government to develop a long-term Roadmap to guide solar energy research. The Roadmap Committee will identify the research, development and demonstration activities needed to improve the performance and reliability of solar technologies, to decrease cost, and to reduce water use.

- Create a Strategic Plan for Solar Energy - The Act will create a Roadmap that will present the best current estimate of the near-term (up to 2 years), mid-term (up to 7 years) and long-term (up to 15 years) research, development and demonstration needs in solar technology. The Committee must update the Roadmap annually as needed, and comprehensively review and revise the Roadmap every three years.

• Invest in Photovoltaics - The measure authorizes the Department of Energy (DOE) to conduct photovoltaic demonstration projects of various sizes. DOE is also required to study the performance of photovoltaic installations and to identify opportunities to improve the energy productivity of these systems.

• Authorize the Use of Solar Technology Funds - The bill authorizes \$350 million for DOE to carry out the Solar Roadmap activities in FY 2011, gradually increasing funding to \$550 million by FY 2015. H.R. 3585 also authorizes over \$2 billion for new research partnerships and demonstration projects.

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