

(November 3, 2005) Lipinski Recognizes the Next Generation of Solar Energy Innovators

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WASHINGTON, DC - On November 2, Congressman Dan Lipinski (IL-03) heard from university professors and graduate students about what it will take to harness the power of the sun and progress toward the solar power and energy efficiency technologies of the future.

During a U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science hearing, participants shared what they learned from their involvement in the recently completed 2005 Solar Decathlon, which was held on the National Mall in Washington, DC last month.

The Solar Decathlon was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and featured a contest in which students from major universities around the country demonstrated houses of their own design featuring solar energy production technologies and innovative energy conservation features.

"I have been interested in the potential of solar power for more than 25 years. My 8th grade science fair project examined the future role of solar energy. As an example, I built a radio powered by a photovoltaic cell," stated Congressman Lipinski.

"Today we can see how far the use of solar energy has progressed in the tremendous work of these students in the solar decathlon," added Lipinski. "As an engineer myself, it is especially fascinating to see the design innovations that were developed and used in these solar houses that also have real world applications."

Eighteen decathlon teams designed houses that were judged on ten attributes including the living and operating environments as well as the benefits of the technology. The event, designed to stimulate innovation and inspire today's students to pursue careers in science, technology and engineering fields, was first held on the Mall in 2002.

The Committee heard from witnesses about their experiences in the planning, design development, construction and set-up for the competition on the Mall.

"This exciting opportunity for students emphasizes the great potential that solar energy has for helping with our future energy needs," said Congressman Lipinski. "As we face sky-rocketing costs for natural gas to heat our homes this winter,

the work done in this competition is especially relevant."

"Just as my science project helped inspire me to pursue an engineering degree, I hope that the Solar Decathlon inspires more young Americans to pursue degrees in science and engineering. For the continued security and economic success of America, we must continue to do all we can to maintain our technological competitive edge. This continues to be one of my highest priorities in Congress and on the Science Committee."