

(January 25, 2007) H-Prize Introduced in the Senate

Graham Introduces H-Prize Legislation in the U.S. Senate

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WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) continued his push for energy independence and innovation by reintroducing legislation in the U.S. Senate yesterday creating the H-Prize. The H-Prize is meant to help overcome the technical challenges related to using hydrogen as a widely available and abundant fuel source by offering cash incentives. Graham introduced similar legislation in the last Congress.

"As a nation, we need to become less dependent on foreign oil," said Graham. "Last night, President Bush called on the nation to reduce gasoline usage by twenty percent over the next ten years. I completely support his call for energy independence, and the H-Prize can help lead the move away from fossil fuels and toward alternative sources of energy such as hydrogen."

Graham serves as the co-chair of the Senate Hydrogen Caucus, along with Senator Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota). Dorgan has signed on as the lead Democratic sponsor of the H-Prize legislation in the Senate. The bill was introduced in the House of Representative by Congressmen Bob Inglis (R-South Carolina) and Daniel Lipinski (D-Illinois).

Graham noted South Carolina is a national leader in hydrogen research. The University of South Carolina is developing hydrogen fuel cells, Clemson is working on hydrogen vehicles, Aiken County has established a Hydrogen Research Center, and the Savannah River Site is a leading research facility in hydrogen storage and technology. These groups and others recently united behind the South Carolina Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association which coordinates the state's efforts to be a leading player in the emerging hydrogen economy.

The H-Prize is modeled on the Ansari X Prize which spurred the first privately funded suborbital human spaceflight.

Awards will be offered in the following categories:

* Technological Advancement: Four prizes of up to \$1 million will be awarded every two years for outstanding achievements in the Production, Storage, Distribution, and Utilization of hydrogen.

* Prototypes: One prize of up to \$4 million will be awarded every two years for working hydrogen vehicle prototypes that

meets performance goals.

* Transformational Technology: Over the next ten years, a single \$10 million prize funded by the federal government or private donations for breakthrough hydrogen technologies.

The legislation directs the Secretary of Energy to contract with a private foundation or other non-profit entity to establish criteria for the prizes and administer the prize contest.

"In 50 years, if we're still reliant on Middle Eastern oil to drive our national economy, we will have done a great disservice to future generations. I appreciate Congressman Inglis's leadership in the House, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance our nation's energy independence. The H-Prize will help foster additional research and development in the long-overdue effort to make hydrogen a significant source of our nation's energy supply."