

(March 12, 2007) House Approves Science & Technology Committee Legislation

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(Washington, DC) - The U.S. House of Representatives today approved legislation aimed at improving America's global competitiveness, increasing energy efficiency and advancing research essential to economic progress. Each bill - products of the House Committee on Science and Technology - passed the House with overwhelming support.

"I'm proud that my colleagues on both the Committee and in the House have advanced these bipartisan, consensus bills that put good ideas into practice for our constituents and our country," said Committee Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN).

The S & T bills passed by the House today include:

H.R. 1068, amending the High-Performance Computing Act of 1991 is designed to improve planning and coordination for interagency research and development in information technology under the research program established by the High-Performance Computing Act of 1991.

Research and Science Education Subcommittee Chairman Brian Baird (D-WA) sponsored the bill along with co-sponsor, Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL) - who proposed similar legislation in both the 108th and 109th Congress.

"Information technology is an engine that drives economic growth in this country," said Chairman Baird. "It creates high-wage jobs, provides for rapid communication throughout the world, and provides tools for closing the knowledge gap. This bill will help develop and deploy the fastest, most up-to-date, and technologically advanced super-computing systems that are essential for U.S. scientific, industrial, and military competitiveness."

H.R. 85, the Energy Technology Transfer Act sponsored by Rep. Biggert, along with Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Brad Miller (D-NC), establishes a network of Advanced Energy Technology Transfer Centers to partner with the U.S. Department of Energy to showcase advanced energy technologies.

H.R. 85 is designed to spur the transfer of advanced energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies from the laboratory and to the public where they can be put to use.

"I am pleased to have worked with Rep. Biggert to make the technology transfer program at DOE even more effective.

We identified a gap in public knowledge of advanced energy technologies and sought to close that gap through the education and outreach effort I established in EPACT (Section 917). H.R. 85 improves on that concept and gets this effort up and running," Chairman Miller said.

H.R. 1126, a bill to reauthorize the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988, was introduced by the Committee's Vice-Chairman, Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) and fellow Committee Members Rep. Todd Akin (R-MO) and Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-MI).

The measure authorizes \$12 million a year for five years to fund advanced metals research. These federal cost-share funds, along with funds from the steel industry, would support research at universities to promote energy-efficiency, increased competitiveness and environmental improvements.

"The steel industry and other metals industries are critical elements of our national economy," Chairman Lipinski said. "By investing in R&D and encouraging public-private partnerships with industry, universities and the federal government, this legislation will help promote innovation in America's manufacturing economy, help protect valuable jobs and at the same time, help develop environmentally friendly technologies to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow."

H.R. 1068 and 1126 were approved by voice vote. H.R. 85 passed the House by a vote of 395-1. These three bills now advance to the U.S. Senate for consideration.