

Introducing the Securing Transportation Energy Efficiency for Tomorrow Act

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**  
OF MINNESOTA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*February 9, 2005*

Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced the “Securing Transportation Energy Efficiency for Tomorrow Act” (the *STREET* ACT). This bill recognizes the close connection between transportation policy and energy policy. In many respects, transportation policy *is* energy policy. Our transportation energy needs are increasing, but we have not done enough to be able to meet these needs with new technologies and alternative fuels. As a result, our dependence on foreign oil continues unabated.

Today, the transportation sector consumes a greater share of petroleum (67 percent) than it did in 1973 (50 percent). Each year for the past decade, energy use in the transportation sector has increased by a rate of 1.6 percent. It is time, indeed it is long overdue, for the Federal Government to lead in the development and promotion of energy efficient technologies and alternative and renewable fuels.

As the Nation’s largest energy consumer, the Federal Government is in a unique position to promote energy conservation and efficiency, particularly in the transportation sector and in the operation of Federal buildings. The *STREET* ACT ensures that the Government does just that by promoting greater energy efficiency and further developing the use of alternative and renewable fuels on our highways, railroads, airplanes, ships, and in our Federal buildings.

For example, the bill provides for the use of photovoltaic solar energy systems (photovoltaics) in our Federal buildings. Photovoltaics reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and offer distinct advantages over diesel generators and primary batteries. Photovoltaics are highly efficient and have no moving parts, so the need for maintenance is virtually non-existent. Over 25

Federal buildings throughout the country, from Boston, Massachusetts, to San Francisco, California, already use photovoltaics to great effect. This bill seeks to fulfill the promise of President Clinton's Million Solar Roofs Initiative of 1997 of having photovoltaic solar energy systems installed in 20,000 of our Federal buildings by 2010.

The bill also provides for the development and deployment of new technologies to create cleaner, more fuel-efficient engines for use in all modes of transportation including on rail, in water, and in the air. The bill authorizes the Department of Transportation to enter into public-private partnerships with universities and industry leaders to promote the development of cleaner, more fuel-efficient engines for our Nation's railroads, ships, and airplanes. These clean engines would help reduce ozone-forming emissions and would be especially significant in areas of nonattainment. Research on many of these projects has already begun, and this bill ensures that the Federal Government remains committed to the development and deployment of these promising new technologies.

To promote the use of cleaner energy on our Nation's highways, the bill establishes a grant program by which the Department of Transportation can make up to ten grants for the development and demonstration of fuel cell-powered buses. Heavy-duty vehicles, which include buses, account for only 6 percent of the total vehicle population, but generate 60 percent of nitrogen oxide emissions and over 80 percent of all particulate matter emissions. Fuel cell buses would reduce pollution on our roads through the use of a clean, environmentally-friendly energy source and would help reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

In addition, the bill provides a \$75 transportation fringe benefit to employees who commute to work by bicycling, carpooling, or car-sharing. Currently, employees who drive to work can receive a \$200 per month parking benefit and employees who use transit can receive up to \$105 per

month. This bill represents a first step in extending those benefits to citizens who choose to promote energy conservation while commuting to and from their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to make a real and lasting commitment to the development of these new technologies and the use of alternative and renewable fuel that can help make this Nation more self-sufficient in meeting our energy needs. We have the means available; the place to begin is with the Federal government and with this bill.

A detailed summary of the bill's provisions is attached.

## **Securing Transportation Energy Efficiency for Tomorrow Act of 2005 (THE *STREET* ACT)**

The Securing Transportation Energy Efficiency for Tomorrow Act (the *STREET* Act) recognizes the connection between energy policy and transportation policy and the importance of utilizing new technologies and alternative fuels to meet our transportation energy needs. The *STREET* Act promotes the Federal Government's leadership in the development and utilization of alternative and renewable fuels in the transportation sector and in the operation of Federal buildings. Our Nation's energy needs are increasing. Energy use in the transportation sector alone has increased by a rate of 1.6 percent each year for the past decade. The vast majority of that energy (approximately 97 percent) comes from traditional fuels. Today, the transportation sector consumes a greater share of petroleum (67 percent) than it did in 1973 (50 percent).

As the Nation's largest energy consumer, the Federal Government is in a unique position to promote energy efficiency and the use of alternative and renewable fuels. The *STREET* Act promotes greater energy efficiency in our transportation sector and our Federal buildings and furthers the development and use of alternative and renewable fuels in our highways, our railroads, our airplanes, our ships, and in our Federal buildings.

### **Economic Development and Public Buildings**

**Photovoltaic Solar Energy Systems for Public Buildings.** Amends the Public Buildings Act of 1959 to authorize the Administrator of the General Services Administration to establish a photovoltaic energy commercialization program for the procurement and installation of photovoltaic solar energy systems for electric production in new and existing public buildings. The purposes of this section include a reduction in fossil fuel consumption and attainment of the goal of installing 20,000 solar energy systems in federal public buildings set forth in the Federal Government's Million Solar Roof Initiative of 1997. The bill authorizes approximately \$300 million

over 5 years for this program. This section also authorizes \$14 million for the Administrator of the General Services Administration to install photovoltaics in accordance with the Sun Wall Design Project on the headquarters building of the Department of Energy.

**Capitol Complex Energy Efficiency.** Authorizes the Architect of the Capitol to conduct a study to evaluate the energy infrastructure of the Capitol complex to determine ways to increase energy efficiency including the use of photovoltaic solar energy systems, district heating, and other unconventional and renewable energy resources. The bill authorizes such sums as may be necessary for this study.

#### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION**

**Highway Fuel Conservation.** Establishes a grant program through which the Secretary of Transportation may provide grants to States and local governments for projects designed to make operational improvements to reduce fuel consumption on Federal-aid highways and roads, including data collection and analysis for improved traffic signal timing, implementation of improved and coordinated traffic signals, and planning and implementation of freeway management systems. The bill authorizes such sums as may be necessary to carry out this program.

**Fuel Cell Bus Technology.** Amends Section 5308, Title 49 of the United States Code to allow the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to up to 10 recipients for the research and development of fuel cell bus technology. Preference is given to grant applicants who have an existing fuel cell bus technology program and have made investments in hydrogen fuel cell infrastructure. The bill authorizes \$300 million over 5 years for this grant program.

**Conserve by Bicycling.** Authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to establish a pilot program that would provide funding for up to 10 geographically dispersed projects to encourage the use of bicycles in place of motor vehicles. The bill authorizes \$10 million for this program.

**Energy Impacts.** Requires that environmental impact statements prepared for Federal-aid highway and transit projects quantify and consider energy impacts as an environmental consequence of the project. Currently, Federal Highway Administration guidelines state that energy impacts should be considered as one of 25 environmental consequences in an EIS. However, the guidelines state that “except for large scale projects, a detailed energy analysis ... is not needed.” As a consequence, the energy impact of smaller-scale projects is often not quantified and not thoroughly considered. This section remedies that by requiring that all Federal-aid highway and transit projects quantify and consider energy impacts.

**Extension of Transportation Fringe Benefits.** Amends section 132(f) of the Internal Revenue Code to include as a transportation fringe benefit that is excludable from an employee’s gross income, a \$75 commuting allowance for employees who commute to work by bicycling, carpooling or car-sharing.

**Railroad Efficiency.** Authorizes the Secretary of Transportation, in conjunction with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to establish a public-private research partnership to develop and demonstrate locomotive technologies that increase fuel economy, reduce emissions, and lower costs. The bill authorizes \$105 million over 3 years for this program.

#### AVIATION

**Clean Airport Bus Pilot Program.** Directs the Secretary of Transportation to establish a pilot grants award program for the acquisition of buses powered by alternative fuels and low-sulfur diesel fuel at public airports through airport bus replacement and fleet expansion grants. Grants are to be used to purchase buses powered by alternative fuels and low-sulfur diesel fuel to be used as part of the airport fleet for a minimum of 5 years and, to the extent possible, grants are to be awarded to ensure a broad geographic distribution with no State receiving more than 10 percent of the available grant funding. The bill authorizes \$200 million over 5 years for this grant program.

**Clean Aircraft Engines.** Authorizes the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to establish a public-private research partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, research universities, and members of the aero-propulsion industry to develop a clean ground demonstrator engine utilizing technologies developed by NASA and to focus on the development and certification of environmentally friendly manufacturing technologies, materials, and overhaul and repair. The bill authorizes such sums as may be necessary for the establishment of this public-private partnership.

#### **WATER RESOURCES**

**Marine Efficiency.** Authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to establish a public-private research partnership with the Federal Government, vessel operators, ports, terminal operators, shipyards, and equipment suppliers to develop and demonstrate technologies that increase fuel economy, reduce emissions, and lower costs of marine transportation and increase the efficiency of intermodal transfers. The bill authorizes such sums as may be necessary for the establishment of this public-private partnership.

**Improving Hydropower Capabilities.** Directs the Secretary of the Army to study the potential for reduced fossil fuel consumption through an increase in U.S. hydropower capabilities at dams owned or operated by the Corps of Engineers.

**Encouragement of Prohibitions on Great Lakes Off-Shore Drilling.** Contains a finding by Congress that environmental dangers associated with off-shore drilling in the Great Lakes for oil and gas outweigh the potential benefits of such drilling and encourages the Great Lake states to continue to prohibit off-shore drilling for oil and gas where such prohibitions already exist and to enact a prohibition of such drilling where one does not yet exist.