

Our energy policies play a key role in the health of our economy and the quality of life in our nation, and should be formed through an open, deliberative process. To this end, I have taken an active role in establishing the [Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition \(SEEC\)](#) in the House of Representatives. SEEC is working to ensure that the House considers legislation that will address our energy needs while also creating millions of new, clean energy jobs, makes America more energy independent and secure, and addresses global climate change. In the aftermath of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, SEEC fought to hold BP and Big Oil accountable for the disaster and strengthen regulation of oil and gas drilling and standards for rig safety, oil spill prevention and response, and enhance protections for American coasts, lands, and waters.

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Energy Independence

With only 3% of the known oil reserves in the world, the United States cannot become energy independent or measurably affect the world price of oil simply by drilling more within our borders. We can do so, however, by calling upon the same sense of destiny and confidence in our technological talent upon which President Kennedy relied upon to take us to the Moon and develop alternative energy sources and energy conservation measures. The rest of the nation must follow our state of California's lead in the area of [energy conservation](#). These efforts must be replicated and supported at the federal level by giving more grants and incentives to state and local governments and schools who undertake energy efficiency, conservation and alternative fuels programs. We must also strive to make our vehicles more fuel efficient, which will help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. I am encouraged that President Obama has moved to [increase fuel economy standards](#)

for vehicles and supported efforts to make

[homes, businesses, and government more energy efficient](#)

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Comprehensive reform of our energy policies is needed, and during my time in Congress I have pursued a legislative agenda that bolsters federal efforts to encourage energy conservation, as well as research and development of renewable energy sources. I believe that we need a bold new vision for our energy policies, one which unleashes American ingenuity and talent to create a new clean energy economy in which the United States will regain its rightful place as a world leader; moves us toward energy independence; addresses our global warming challenges; equips President Obama with the tools he needs to negotiate an effective international greenhouse gas emissions agreement that includes the developing economies of such countries as China and India; and accurately reflects the cost of carbon emissions so that carbon-free energy sources can compete on a level playing field.

Smart Electronics Act

I introduced [H.R. 2748](#) , the Smart Electronics Act, to address the greenhouse gas impacts and energy costs of the proliferation of electronic devices throughout the world.

The [International Energy Agency](#) (IEA) estimates that by 2030, new electronic gadgets will triple their energy consumption to 1,700 terawatt hours, the equivalent of the home electricity consumption of the US and Japan combined. According to the IEA, the international community will have to build over 15,000 wind turbines (or 200 nuclear power plants) to power all the home electronics expected to be plugged in by 2030. The electric bill to power all household electronics will top \$200 billion a year, compared with last year's bill of \$80 billion. Most of this increase in consumer electronics will occur in developing countries, where economic growth is outpacing developed nations and ownership rates of gadgets are lowest.

This proliferation of electronic devices, if not made more energy efficient, will undermine efforts to increase energy security and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. The answer to this problem will not be found in stemming the tide of electronic gadget envy, no matter how functional or entertaining the device. The answer is found in better devices that are built more efficiently and run on less energy. Importantly, this legislation helps us green the electronics industry by providing the private sector with reliable standards and incentives and by educating and empowering consumers to make smarter and more efficient

choices – all of which help cool the planet and keep Silicon Valley innovative.

Learn more about the [Smart Electronics Act here](#). [EW1]

Field Hearing on Renewable Energy

During my time as Ranking Member of the House Science Committee's Subcommittee on Energy, I held an Energy Subcommittee Field Hearing with Chairwoman Judy Biggert at the San Jose, CA City Hall Council Chambers. The hearing addressed the potential of renewable energy technologies to reduce dependence on foreign energy sources, lower the cost of energy to consumers and boost American international competitiveness. Five experts in the field testified at the hearing:

- Dr. Steven Chu , the current Secretary of Energy. At the time of the hearing, Dr. Chu served as Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He is the 1997 Nobel Prize winner in Physics.
- Dr. Arno Penzias , Venture Partner with New Enterprise Associates in Palo Alto, CA While at Bell Laboratories he won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1978. Today he is a venture capitalist with interests in renewable energy technologies.
- Christian Larsen , Vice President for Generation for the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, CA. His division provides data on cost and performance analyses and for renewable, distributed, and hydropower energy generation technologies to the electricity industry.
- David Pearce , President and CEO of Miasolé, a Santa Clara, CA based company that manufactures industrial-scale solar products using thin film solar cell technology developed in Department of Energy national laboratories.
- Ron Swenson, cofounder of ElectroRoof, a solar equipment installation company, and EcoSage, an educational services company developing a program to build solar-powered satellite teaching centers in remote areas of the world in conjunction with solar education programs in schools.

You can view the [webcast of the hearing](#) .

Democratization of Energy

I believe that the promotion of renewable energy and energy conservation can be good not only for the United States, but also for poor people in developing countries. For the poorest countries, energy is a source of their poverty. 38 of the poorest countries are net importers of oil, and 25 of them import all of their oil. The top recipients under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative are spending the money saved from debt relief on the increasing price of oil rather than on educating their kids, fighting HIV/AIDS, providing clean water, or increasing access to health care. Approximately 2 billion people worldwide are left without reliable energy sources, without refrigeration, without basic communication, heat, or even light because of the high cost and inaccessibility of fossil fuels.

I believe in the concept of “Democratization of Energy” through which we can use renewable energy to put control in the in the hands of the people, not in the hands of multinational corporations or dictators, which will help to realize revolutions in political systems, standards of living, and environmental protection.

Read my remarks from the International Conference on Renewable Energy for Developing Countries and an account of my discussion on the subject with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon [here](#) .