

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Representatives Michael M. Honda (CA – 15) and Judy Biggert (IL – 13) held an official hearing of the U.S. House Science Subcommittee on Energy on 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. Honda and Biggert are Ranking Member and Chairman of the House Science Subcommittee on Energy, respectively. Testimony was taken by experts in the field, including two Nobel Prize winners in physics. The hearing was held at the San Jose, CA City Hall Council Chambers.

“Throughout history, wars have been fought over non-renewable natural resources,” said Honda. “In a world focused on using renewable energy, these conflicts could be avoided and greater stability achieved. But we need to convince consumers to adopt renewable energy. To do so, we need to make renewables cost effective and improve their performance.

“The U.S. was once the leader in solar technologies, but last year, only 11 percent of the photovoltaic generating capacity was manufactured here; and we have fallen behind our global competitors, such as Germany and Japan, which saw solar installation increase as a result of significant incentive programs.

Honda concluded, “But all is not lost, because nature gives us an advantage – the United States has far greater potential for solar power than many of our international rivals. We also have tremendous growth potential in the development of other renewable energy technologies such as biofuels, and wind. We must leverage this power today to eliminate our dependence on foreign energy sources, maintain our global competitiveness and to protect our environment.”

“Americans want affordable energy and a clean and safe environment, and yet, because we’ve undervalued renewable energy research, we act as though the two are mutually exclusive,” said Biggert. “If we are to be successful in addressing the threat of climate change, we have to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. That means not only improving energy efficiency, but also greatly expanding our use of renewable and non-greenhouse gas-emitting energy technologies such as nuclear power.

“Because of population growth and economic expansion, we must expand our use of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies faster than the growth in our consumption of energy,” said Biggert, concluding, “Making progress on the development of renewable energy is every bit as important as making progress in increasing energy efficiency.”

Witnesses appearing before the panel included:

\* Dr. Steven Chu, Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and a 1997 Nobel Prize winner in Physics. He is currently spearheading a new Laboratory research initiative

focused on solar energy.

\* 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.

For the complete texts of witness testimony, please visit the U.S. House Committee on Science website: <http://www.house.gov/science/>