

I rise today in support of H.R. 3585, the Solar Technology Roadmap Act.

The United States is currently the world's leader in solar power technologies. However, countries like China, Germany, and Spain are making major investments in this field, unless we increase our investment in research, development and demonstration, RD&D, into new solar technologies our global competitiveness will be at risk.

The Solar Technology Roadmap Act would provide this much needed funding and create a comprehensive program to strengthen and coordinate the development and improvement of our Nation's solar energy technologies. The bill creates a Solar Energy Roadmap Committee comprised of representatives from industry, academia, and government researchers responsible for developing a long-term roadmap to guide solar energy research. The Roadmap Committee would identify the RD&D activities needed to improve the performance and reliability of solar technologies, decrease cost, and reduce water use. This research plan would guide the awarding of funds for solar energy RD&D by the Department of Energy and would help commercialize new solar technologies and create new public-private partnerships to make this clean, renewable energy source more affordable and accessible for all Americans.

Unfortunately, the House Committee on Rules did not make in order two amendments that I offered. One of my amendments would have allowed the Secretary of Energy to use a portion of the \$2 billion authorized for solar energy to study the factors affecting whether consumers choose to adopt and use solar power. Unless we understand these factors it will be difficult to understand how best to encourage the widespread utilization of solar energy. I also offered an amendment that would have required small businesses to be given preference when distributing the RD&D authorized in this act. I am sorry that these amendments were not debated today.

My home State of New Jersey has made a strong investment into the deployment of solar energy. Through its Renewable Energy Incentive Program, REIP, New Jersey has encouraged the installation of over 4,300 solar electricity systems in our State's businesses, homes, and public institutions. We have more solar installations per mile than any other State in the Union, and are the second largest solar market in the country. Our solar companies, including several located within my congressional district, are conducting innovative RD&D into cutting edge solar technologies and our solar installers, dealers, and project developers have created hundreds of clean energy jobs.

Supporting an increased Federal investment into RD&D would help to continue this effort. I urge

my colleagues to support this legislation.