Holt visits a solar-paneled building in Lawrenceville.

"Regardless of the price of gasoline our nation is still overly dependent on fossil fuels. Unless we reverse the policies created generations ago that have made us overly dependent on foreign fuel it is inevitable that gas prices will increase again in the future. We need to take a thoughtful, fact-based approach to develop a long term strategy which will decrease our dependence on foreign oil and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions." – Rush Holt

As an energy scientist who spent nearly a decade working at one of the nation's premier alternative energy research labs, Rep. Holt has worked in Congress to help craft a strategy that will provide real energy security for residents in Central New Jersey and throughout the United States. A member of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition , Rep. Holt

believes strongly that Congress should focus on the development of sustainable energy sources that reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. By doing so, the United States can fulfill the energy needs of a growing economy without compromising our national security interests or devastating our environment.

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The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009

In June, Rep. Holt supported the American Clean Energy and Security Act. The legislation – which the Senate still needs to pass – would cap greenhouse gas emissions, promote the production of renewable energy, and help make homes, cars, and businesses more energy efficient. The legislation would require the reduction of carbon emissions by 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. It would implement a Renewable Electricity Standard that would require electric utilities to provide 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2020. While arguing for a greater investment in research and development into clean technology, Rep. Holt supported the bill, saying that it "would help to slow the rate of global warming and preserve our environment for future generations." According to the Center for American Progress, the bill would help to create 1.7 million new, high skilled clean energy jobs over the next decade.

The bill includes a number of provisions written by Rep. Holt, including the authorization of the

WaterSense program
that would help consumers identify water efficient products and the creation of a research program to study the role that human behavior will play in energy consumption and climate change. It also includes a provision to require the Departments of Energy, Labor and Education to compile an online database for a renewable energy curriculum that would be easily accessible to community colleges, vocational schools and universities.

Bill Summary: Energy and Commerce Committee

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

Rush Holt cosponsored and voted for H.R. 6, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, historic energy legislation to decrease our dependence on foreign fuels and increase the use of renewable energy. This legislation, signed into law on December 19, 2007, will reduce projected greenhouse gas emissions by nearly a quarter by 2030. H.R. 6 requires buildings and appliances to be more energy efficient, provides for green job training, and requires the United States to engage the global community in setting strong emissions standards which will slow the rate of global warming.

The bill also included the first increase in automobile fuel efficiency in nearly 30 years. Rep. Holt was a strong advocate for including language in the law that raised fuel standards to 35 miles per gallon by 2020.

Bill Summary: From the Library of Congress' Thomas Database
Fact Sheet : Gas Prices Myths vs. Facts

Intelligent Transportation

Rep. Holt believes that one way to deal with high gas prices is to utilize information technology to allow drivers to utilize existing transportation systems more efficiently. The 2007 energy bill includes Rep. Holt's amendment requiring a study by the Center for Climate Change and the Environmental Protection Agency of the fuel savings that could be achieved through the use of information technology. Using intelligent transportation systems like real-time traffic monitoring, alternate route planning, and congestion management, America could decrease the amount of fuel wasted in daily traffic.

Renewable Energy

To help end our nation's dependence on foreign fuels, Rep. Holt has championed tax credits for solar, wind, geothermal, hydroelectric, biomass, fuel cell, and other sustainable energy technology. He also has introduced legislation to expand the tax credits available for hybrid and electric cars. He strongly supported the Economic Recovery Bill, which makes substantial investments in alternative energy.

Rep. Holt also is a strong supporter of a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), which would ensure that a certain percentage of electricity be produced by renewable sources. He has supported efforts to establish a 20 percent RPS by the year 2027. The RPS is one of the most effective ways to promote the use of renewable energy while maintaining the flexibility required for each region of the country to choose the renewable technologies best suited to their climate and resources.

Fact Sheet: Alternative Energy Provisions in the Economic Recovery Bill

Green Schools

In January 2009, Rep. Holt reintroduced the School Building Enhancement Act, legislation that would help schools implement energy saving measures to reduce their energy costs. Energy bills are the second-highest operating expenditure for schools after personnel costs, with the annual spending by schools on energy at $8 billion in 2007.

Holt's bill would authorize $6.4 billion over five years for school construction, including funding to help schools become more energy efficient. On May 14, 2009, the House of Representatives passed Holt's Green Schools initiative as part of the School Modernization Bill .

Investing in Energy Research

Federal investment in research and development is one of the best investments our country can make. Rep. Holt has led the effort in Congress to provide robust funding for Department of Energy (DOE) Science programs, including the Fusion Energy Sciences program. The fusion energy program has made impressive – although generally unrecognized – progress in the past years despite being severely under-funded. The DOE Office of Science received $1.6 billion in the Economic Recovery Bill, putting the office's budget back on track to double over the next seven years, as called for under the America COMPETES Act.

Looking for New Solutions

Rep. Holt is opposed to any new drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf. He has voted against legislation that would open up new areas of the OCS for oil and gas drilling. He also consistently has opposed opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas development. He has cosponsored legislation that would designate 1.6 million acres on Alaska's northern coastal plan as a wilderness area.

Rep. Holt believes we need innovative solutions to lower energy costs and help curb global climate change. For instance, a recent study found that cool roofing, which involves lightening the color of roofing and pavements to lower heat absorption, is an effective energy saving tool. Click
here
to read a recent
eGenda
for more information on this easy way to save on cooling bills.

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