

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today sent a letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi urging her to bring important solar energy legislation to the House floor for a vote.

Mitchell said that the passage of the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Act of 2007 is important to Arizona and America's path toward energy independence.

"The time to act is now," Mitchell said. "We have a unique opportunity in Arizona – more so than any other state – and there is no reason that Arizona cannot become the Saudi Arabia of Solar Energy."

H.R. 2776 provides tax incentives for homeowners and small electric utilities to encourage the use of renewable energy sources like solar power and has already passed the House Ways and Means Committee.

According to the Energy Information Administration, "Arizona's large desert areas offer the highest solar power potential in the country." [Source: [Energy Information Administration Web site](#)]

Mitchell has co-sponsored several bills aimed at boosting America's investment in solar energy, including

- H.R. 550, the Securing America's Energy Independence Act of 2007, which extends a tax credit for homeowners who invest in renewable energy technologies, such as solar energy, on their property. This tax credit is currently set to expire in 2008; this legislation extends the tax credit to 2017.

- H.R. 197, which extends the renewable energy production tax credit – a tax credit for electric utilities that invest in certain renewable technologies, like solar and wind, for power generation – for five years.

- H.R. 364, which creates the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy – a high-level research team whose goal would be to reduce U.S. energy imports from by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

- H.R. 2774, the Solar Energy Research and Advancement Act of 2007, which would develop and strengthen the nation's solar industry workforce.

Text of Mitchell's letter to Speaker Pelosi:

July 17, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker

United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Madam Speaker:

I am writing to urge you to bring H.R. 2776, the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Act of 2007 to the floor for a vote as soon as possible. This bill provides critical tax incentives for homeowners and small electric utilities to encourage the use of renewable energy sources like solar power. This legislation has passed the Ways and Means Committee with bipartisan support and is currently waiting consideration on the House floor.

Energy independence is a high priority for my constituents, and you have rightfully made it high priority for this Congress. Unfortunately, this follows six years during which the federal government took little action toward investing in alternative energy.

Because of recent inaction, many states have decided to take matters into their own hands. My home state of Arizona recently enacted a law that would require 15 percent of energy production to come from renewable sources by 2025. Further, it would require solar energy to contribute 30 percent of that production. Arizona is not alone, 21 states and the District of Columbia have adopted similar renewable energy laws.

In order to meet this requirement, power utilities in my district are offering incentives to homeowners to install solar panels on their property. Many homeowners produce enough energy to feed into the power grid during the day when power is expensive, and draw from the grid when the sun goes down. As a result, solar power ends up being good for their pocketbook as well as the environment.

Further investing in solar energy is an important step toward energy independence and carbon neutrality. It is important that consumers and businesses must be given encouragement to embrace the technology. This bill provides important tax incentives to ensure that consumers can take full advantage of current and future solar technologies.

Under your leadership, this Congress has already taken unprecedented action to move our nation toward energy independence and carbon neutrality. I urge you to the next step, and bring this bill to the floor as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Harry E. Mitchell
Member of Congress