

[The Arizona Republic](#)

Alex Bloom

U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell toured three Scottsdale businesses Wednesday to tout federal renewable-energy tax credits set to expire Dec. 31.

The congressman visited the Vanguard Group, Scottsdale Airpark office buildings and the Body Sculpting Center.

All installed solar power and Body Sculpting benefited from the tax credits.

Mitchell, a Democrat seeking re-election Nov. 4, said the potential for solar energy in Arizona is "outstanding" and that the tax credits are integral to helping lower energy costs.

"Just in terms of our whole energy, we need a comprehensive plan," Mitchell said. "What better alternative in Arizona than sunshine? It's a no-brainer."

Congress adjourned for its summer recess without extending the renewable-energy credits.

The credits provide a 30 percent rebate to homes and businesses that install or build solar- or wind-energy systems. A coalition of Democrats and Republicans supports the measure but lawmakers have not decided on an extension.

Marvin Borsand of the Body Sculpting Center, 2255 N. Scottsdale Road, paid \$180,000 to install a 30-kilowatt system at the south Scottsdale business in January.

"It's made a very significant difference for us, much more than we expected," Borsand said. "We originally thought they'd pay back (in) maybe seven years. It's down to about four now."

The federal government rebate covered 30 percent of Body Sculpting's costs of the panels and their installation.

The business also received credits from the state and from the Salt River Project, which issued a one-time \$66,000 rebate based on kilowatt-hours saved by the solar panels.

The newest building at the Vanguard Group's north Scottsdale four-building campus uses solar panels. They cover 3 percent of its energy use.

Mitchell also visited the Scottsdale Airpark, where in 2001 Hope Pharmaceuticals had installed solar panels on buildings it leases to do something for the country after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Craig Sherman, president of Hope Pharmaceuticals, said the panels have been a good investment.

"We feel good, the tenants feel good, they can tell their customers that they're green," Sherman said.

Rick Kidder, Scottsdale Area Chamber president, accompanied Mitchell. "If we can start to use more solar here and reduce our carbon footprint in the process and save a little money, it's a win-win-win," Kidder said.

Mitchell said that solar panels will have many benefits for the country.

"The more publicity this gets, the more research that is done, I think it's good for our economy, it's good for national security and it's certainly good for jobs in Arizona," Mitchell said.