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Portions of Larson/Dodd Energy Independence Act Pass House Science Committee Additional Funding Also Included for Fuel Cell Bus Program

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) announced tonight that the House Science Committee passed H.R. 2460, the Comprehensive Energy Research and Development Act, which includes a provision authored by Larson that authorizes a total of \$84 million over 3 years for unique, first of its kind nationwide fuel cell technology demonstration program.

The provision in today's legislation was originally a section of H.R. 1830, the Energy Independence Act, which was introduced by Congressman Larson in the House, and U.S. Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT) in the Senate.

The legislation authorizes \$84 million for fuel cell technology demonstration programs in commercial, residential, and transportation applications. It also establishes a comprehensive Fuel Cell Bus Demonstration Program to address hydrogen production, storage, and transit bus applications; this program will receive a portion of \$150 million over a five-year period. The full House is expected to take up H.R. 2460 some time in the next few weeks.

Larson, who is a member of the Science Committee, stated: "These demonstration programs are going to help refine this technology and the manufacturing process to make fuel cells more robust and affordable, expanding their uses and availability to the general public as an alternative energy source for powering people's homes, businesses, and vehicles. Fuel cell technology is a reliable, environmentally sound, long-term solution to the problems associated with the cost and availability of energy that have plagued the nation for nearly 30 years.

"Fuel cell technology is already in use at several Department of Defense facilities and in a number of private businesses, yet in order for it to expand its presence in the market, it requires strong investment and demonstration through partnerships between the public and private sectors. This technology, which is manufactured here in the United States, can help free us from our dependence on foreign oil, safeguard our environment, and reduce the costs of energy consumption in our cars, homes and businesses," said Larson.

Fuel Cells are produced by a number of Connecticut companies, including International Fuel Cells (IFC), a unit of United Technologies Corporation (UTC), in the First District.

Ruth Harkin, Senior Vice President for International Affairs and Government Relations at UTC stated: "Today's approval of key fuel cell demonstration programs by the House Science Committee will help make this clean, efficient and reliable technology more affordable and available. We applaud Congressman John Larson for championing the demonstration programs and appreciate the strong support of the entire Connecticut delegation in advancing this proposal. We're hopeful Congress will follow the Science Committee's lead and make this revolutionary technology more widely available."

Larson has been a leader in the development of energy policy since being elected to Congress: sponsoring the Energy Independence Act (HR 1830) to promote development of fuel cell technology and cosponsoring HR 1275 to provide tax credits for investment in fuel cell technology in the 107th Congress. In the 106th Congress Larson sponsored the Oil Price Safeguard Act (HR 3543) in to create a trigger mechanism to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) during sustained crude oil price spikes and also cosponsored legislation (HR 3608) and worked with a coalition of

Northeastern members to create the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve now in place, authorized in HR 2884 funded with \$8 million in HR 4578. He fought to increase Connecticut's emergency funding under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) by \$12 million last year and worked with President Clinton to secure the early release of \$400 million in nation-wide emergency LIHEAP funding last winter.

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