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WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today announced at a press conference in support of fuel cell technology on Capitol Hill that he has secured \$5 million for an advanced fuel cell development program to be conducted by the University of Connecticut. The funding was included in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002 during the House Armed Services Research and Development Subcommittee “markup” of the legislation.

“This research and development funding is critical to our effort to move fuel cells further into the mainstream market,” said Larson. “Fuel cells represent a clean, reliable, long-term solution to the energy problems that have plagued this country for nearly 30 years. Moving fuel cells ahead will aid us in making our country energy independent, which translates to a healthier American economy, a cleaner environment, and a stronger national defense.”

As the military becomes more dependent on advanced technology to maintain national military superiority, one of the most pressing needs is for small lightweight electrical power for the individual soldier. Some of the foreseeable power requirements include enhanced hearing, night vision devices, computers, voice/data communications, helmet displays, individual navigation, weapon rangefinders, and possibly individual climate control. The funding will allow UCONN to develop methods to meet these needs by increasing power output and demonstrating more high-performance technology, efforts which should also have significant application in the private sector.

The full committee will take up the bill on Wednesday. Should the provision be approved by the full committee, consideration of the legislation by the full House of Representatives would occur sometime in September.

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