

LARSON APPLAUDS GEPHARDT COMMENTS ON ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND FUEL CELL TECHNOLOGY

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today applauded comments made by House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt regarding the need for the U.S. to become energy independent and for the large-scale development of fuel cell technology.

Rep. Gephardt made the comments today in a speech to the Democratic Leadership Council in which he cited the need to "launch an 'Apollo Project' that develops environmentally smart, renewable energy solutions to make our nation energy independent by the end of the decade." Gephardt stated that there must be a partnership between the public and private sectors that expands fuel cells and other technologies. He added that the goal would be to reduce dependence on foreign oil, create robust growth in the energy sector of our economy, and create new energy sources that protect the environment.

Regarding Rep. Gephardt's speech, Larson stated: "Leader Gephardt's comments today on energy independence and fuel cell technology are entirely in keeping with the legislation introduced by Senator Christopher Dodd and myself last year. I am very pleased to see the Democratic Leadership aggressively moving forward on fuel cell technology as a key to American energy independence from foreign oil. Investment and development of fuel cell technology will allow the U.S. to be independent of foreign oil, create vigorous economic expansion at home and establish an environmentally sound, efficient energy source."

On May 15, 2001, Congressman Larson introduced the Energy Independence Act into the House, which would invest \$1 billion in fuel cell technology over the next five years to develop and demonstrate fuel cells and promote the technology as the energy source of the future. The Act also directs the Department of Energy to develop a strategic plan to ensure the United States is energy self-sufficient by 2011 and provides funding for federally run pilot and demonstration programs. Additionally, the bill also makes a significant grant program available directly to state and local governments interested in integrating fuel cell technology into their existing programs.

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