

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 3, 2011

The Honorable Steven Chu
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0001

Dear Secretary Chu:

We write today in support of the fuel cell and hydrogen energy programs within the Department of Energy (DOE). With the enactment of the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) Continuing Resolution, funding for DOE programs have been reduced by five percent for the remainder of the current fiscal year compared to the amount provided by Congress in FY10. We are concerned, however, that further cuts to these two programs would inhibit the long-term diversification of our nation's energy portfolio and stunt the development of American engineered and domestically-produced energy systems powered by hydrogen and fuel cells.

We share your belief that reasonable investments in clean energy technology can spur job creation through the growth of new and emerging American industries. However, funding reductions to fuel cell and hydrogen programs would discourage manufacturers, private sector investors, suppliers, and potential customers from fully embracing this promising new technology.

As you know, the fuel cell and hydrogen energy programs within DOE are among its most successful. Within the Office of Fossil Energy (OFE), the Solid-State Energy Conversion Alliance (SECA) has met or exceeded every benchmark established by Congress and DOE since its creation. This public-private partnership, in which industry has contributed three dollars for every dollar of government funding, has helped decrease the cost of solid oxide fuel cells (SOFCs) tenfold, while dramatically increasing their efficiency and durability.

Additionally, we believe domestic manufacturers are on the verge of the full scale commercialization of fuel cell systems and hydrogen energy technologies in stationary, backup power and material handling equipment applications, thanks in part to the success of the Fuel Cell Technologies Program within the Office of Energy Efficient and Renewable Energy (EERE). In the case of mobile fuel cells, several auto manufacturers are planning for commercial fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) launches beginning in 2014-2015. This program is helping drive down the cost of fuel cell systems and hydrogen infrastructure, while familiarizing Americans with these new clean energy technologies.

Fuel cells and hydrogen energy systems must continue to play an important role in our nation's energy diversification. From new clean vehicle technology to stand-alone power generation for military installations, universities, and hospitals, fuel cell and hydrogen technologies are on the cusp of revolutionizing the way we use energy in the United States. While the Senate considers the Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations for your agency, we urge you to resist repurposing or cutting these programs that support true energy diversification.

We look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

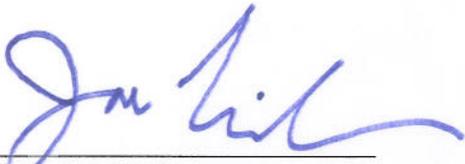
Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



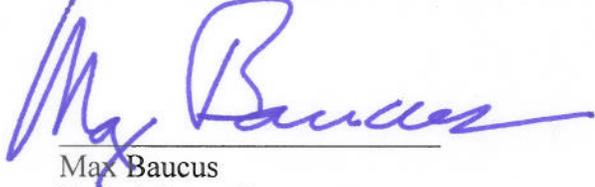
Lindsey Graham
United States Senator



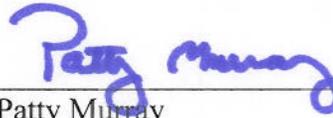
Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



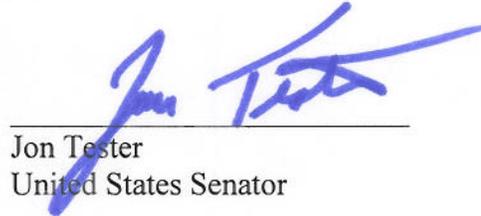
Max Baucus
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Charles Schumer
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



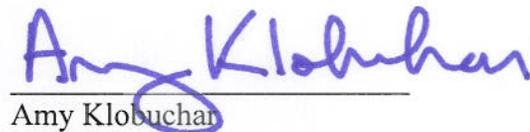
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator