

Washington, DC - As part of his ongoing effort to further establish New York as a national and international solar energy leader, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) this week authored an amendment to a pending solar energy bill that would position New York to get its fair share of federal funding for solar energy research and development. Hinchey is offering his amendment to The Solar Technology Roadmap Act, which is scheduled to come up for a vote this week. The overall bill charts out a plan for solar energy investments throughout the United States over the next five years, making annual investments of up to \$550 million nationwide. Hinchey's amendment would require the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to spread these funds out across the country. Previous funding allocations have been heavily focused in the southwest region of the country.

"The investments that the federal government will make in solar energy research and development over the next several years will really set the course for the decades after that," Hinchey said. "My amendment would ensure that New York has its proper seat at the table and that the solar leaders in our state are involved on the national level. Over the past two and a half years we've accomplished a great deal and helped establish New York as a national and international leader in solar energy research and development. This amendment would help take New York to the next level."

Hinchey's amendment would accomplish three things that will help ensure New York receives its fair share of funding. First, as part of the Solar Technology Roadmap Committee setup under the bill to advise the DOE on solar issues, Hinchey's amendment requires the committee to be comprised of individuals who represent diverse geographic regions of the country. Second, the amendment would ensure that the roadmap addresses the need to make solar technologies widely available and used in all regions of the country. Lastly, Hinchey's amendment requires that demonstration projects setup as part of the underlying bill be undertaken throughout different regions of the country and that such projects are not concentrated in any single geographic area.

"As the federal government makes dramatic new investments in solar energy research and development, it's imperative that New York get its fair share of investment funding and that the dollars don't just flow to the southwest as the largely have in the past," Hinchey said. "While my amendment doesn't specifically mention New York or any other state, we know that since New York is already out in front on solar energy research and development that the state will be well-positioned to receive any federal investment dollars allocated in the northeast."

TSEC President Vincent Cozzolino said, "TSEC applauds Congressman Hinchey for his continued support of solar energy research and development and deployment. Congressman Hinchey's amendment will ensure that federal investments to advance solar energy deployment will benefit every area of the country, including our area, the northeast. Since solar and environmental conditions differ across the nation, this idea makes good sense and will help to optimize solar energy generation by region. This positions New York State to take advantage of the intent of this legislation."

The Solar Technology Roadmap Act establishes a comprehensive roadmapping process to guide the DOE's investment in solar technology research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) activities. The Secretary of Energy is also directed to award grants to carry out these programs on a merit-reviewed basis, and specifically to provide awards to industry-led consortia for RD&D in solar manufacturing. The roadmap provision is modeled on the successful National (now International) Technology Roadmap for Semiconductors, which has been instrumental in helping semiconductor technology advance rapidly over the past two decades. The bill authorizes \$350 million for DOE to carry out these activities in fiscal year 2011, rising to \$550 million in fiscal year 2015.

In 2007, Hinchey helped establish The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) -- an industry-driven, non-profit organization that provides leadership, organization, resources, and support for the establishment of a major solar energy industry cluster in New York. The congressman has now secured more than \$20 million in federal funds for TSEC and its partners with additional funding to be announced in the coming weeks that will increase that figure to nearly \$30 million. The consortium has partnered with more than 70 small and large companies, including nearly a dozen that have already created 200 jobs in the Hudson Valley and collectively plan to bring more than 1,000 new jobs to upstate New York within the next five years.