

Congressman Successfully Secured Passage of an Additional Amendment to Strengthen Oversight of Security Contractors in Iraq & Afghanistan, Close Tax Loophole Exploited by Blackwater

Washington, DC -- As the Department of Defense looks to expand its use of solar energy, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today secured House passage of an amendment he authored that would ensure any solar energy panels purchased by the Department of Defense through subcontracts are made by U.S. manufacturers. No such requirement currently exists and the Pentagon, which is the world's largest consumer of oil, has used subcontractors to purchase solar panels and other equipment from foreign manufacturers. The amendment was included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011.

"As the Department of Defense purchases solar panels to address very serious energy security concerns at defense installations around the country, we must ensure that those purchases support American solar energy manufacturing jobs, including those here in New York, rather than Chinese and other competitors," Hinchey said. "There is no good reason a company in China should be building the solar equipment that our military will use when we have a strong, emerging solar manufacturing presence here in New York.

Hinchey's amendment dealt with the Buy American Act, which requires products purchased directly by the federal government to contain at least 50 percent of American content. The amendment the House approved applies the Buy American Act to the procurement of solar panels purchased indirectly by the Pentagon through subcontracts such as Energy Savings Performance Contracts, land leases, and utility service contracts.