

Subject: Fwd: FPN05-16 Fusion Program Notes - Science CommitteeReports Energy Bill

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FYI

Begin forwarded message:

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FPN05-16 Fusion Program Notes - Science Committee Reports Energy Bill

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February 11, 2005

The Science Committee of the U. S. House of Representatives has endorsed and reported out H.R. 610, The Energy, Research, Development, Demonstration, and Commercial Application Act of 2005. The bill is expected to become a part of a broader energy bill now working its way through Congress.

The bill authorizes \$1.8 billion for fusion over the five year period FY 2006 - 2010. Appropriation of funds, however, is a separate process in Congress.

The bill states, "It shall be the policy of the United States to conduct research, development, demonstration, and commercial application to provide for the scientific, engineering, and commercial infrastructure necessary to ensure that the United States is competitive with other nations in providing fusion energy for its own needs and the needs of other nations, including by demonstrating electric power or hydrogen production for the United States energy grid utilizing fusion energy at the earliest date possible." This statement is in direct contrast to current U.S. Department of Energy policy which limits the scope of its effort to fusion science and has been systematically cutting back and/or terminating work on fusion engineering development and technology. The USDOE currently has no timetable for fusion applications or plan to develop fusion at the "earliest date possible."

The bill calls upon the DOE to provide a plan that ensures that "existing fusion research facilities are more fully utilized," that "fusion science, technology, theory, advanced computation, modeling and simulation are strengthened," that "new magnetic and inertial fusion research and development facilities are selected based on scientific innovation, cost effectiveness, and their potential to advance the goal of practical fusion energy at the earliest date possible, and those that are selected are funded at a cost-effective rate," that "inertial confinement fusion facilities are utilized to the extent practicable for the purpose of inertial fusion energy research and development; and attractive alternative inertial and magnetic fusion energy approaches are more fully utilized."

The bill states that "No Federal funds shall be expended for the construction of ITER until the Secretary has transmitted to Congress . . . a report describing how United States participation in ITER will be funded without reducing funding for other programs in the Office of Science, including other fusion programs, and 60 days have elapsed since that transmission" The bill states, "If at any time during the negotiations on ITER, the Secretary determines that construction and operation of ITER is unlikely or infeasible, the Secretary shall send to Congress, as part of the budget for the following year, a plan for implementing a domestic burning plasma experiment including costs and schedules for such a plan."

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