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H. RES. 177

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning membership of the United States in the International Renewable Energy Agency.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2009

Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning membership of the United States in the International Renewable Energy Agency.

Whereas global warming, depletion of natural resources, population growth, increasing energy demand, rising energy prices, and unequal distribution of energy sources are contributing to the urgent need to transform the energy sector from one which primarily relies on fossil fuels to one that uses renewable energies and energy efficient technologies;

Whereas the potential of renewable energy is vast and its current use is limited due to obstacles that include difficult permitting procedures, import tariffs and technical barriers, insecure financing of renewable energy projects,

and insufficient awareness of the opportunities of renewable energy;

Whereas foreign oil dependence harms the United States economy and consumers, entangles the military in foreign conflicts, endangers public health and the environment through the threat of global warming, and is estimated to have directly cost the United States $7,000,000,000,000 (in constant 2000 dollars) from 1970 to 2005;

Whereas expanding the availability and generating capacity of renewable energy to markets around the world will increase economic opportunity, drive technological innovation, enhance regional and global security, raise living standards, and reduce global warming pollution;

Whereas global energy demand will continue to rise as countries experience economic expansion and industrialization and world population grows to an anticipated level of 9 billion by 2050;

Whereas at least $20,000,000,000,000 of investment in energy generation and infrastructure will be needed worldwide in order to meet the world's energy needs in 2030 (in constant 2005 dollars);

Whereas energy generation and infrastructure takes many decades to turn over, making near-term energy investment decisions instrumental to long-term energy, climate, and economic security;

Whereas the institutional support for renewable energy technology needs to be strengthened to match its growing level of importance to the United States and the world;

Whereas the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) were formed

to address the unique problems and geopolitical dynamics associated with nuclear energy and petroleum, respectively;

Whereas under the guidance and oversight of the IAEA, nuclear power has grown from supplying almost none of the world's electricity at the IAEA's founding in 1957 to 15 percent in 2006;

Whereas since the founding of the IEA, created as an autonomous agency linked with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) during the 1973–1974 Arab oil embargo to guard against severe future oil supply disruptions and help its 28 industrialized oil-consuming member countries counterbalance the growing power of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, global oil consumption has grown 55 percent;

Whereas in 2004, carbon dioxide emissions from OECD countries were surpassed for the first time by emissions from non-OECD countries, and carbon dioxide emissions from developing countries are projected to account for over 75 percent of global emissions growth by 2030;

Whereas encouraging growth of renewable energy in developing countries reduces the extent and likelihood that these economies will follow a carbon-intensive, fossil energy development path;

Whereas the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is the first international organization to focus solely on renewable energy and include a broad constituency of industrialized and developing countries;

Whereas renewable energy is proving to be a major economic driver and source of growth, with more than $100,000,000,000 invested worldwide in new renewable

energy capacity, manufacturing plants, and research and development in 2007, and with revenue growth for companies in the solar photovoltaic, wind, biofuels, and fuel cell industries growing to $77,300,000,000 in 2007, up 40 percent from 2006;

Whereas small hydro, modern biomass (which excludes small-scale combustion of fuel wood, charcoal, plant waste, and animal dung), wind, solar, geothermal, and biofuels make up just 2.4 percent of world energy supply;

Whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that to stabilize greenhouse gases at carbon dioxide equivalent concentrations of roughly 450–500 parts per million—where global temperature rise could be limited to 3.6 to 4.3 degrees Fahrenheit and sea-level rise due to thermal expansion limited to 4.6 feet—global emissions would need to peak by 2015 and decline to as little as 15 percent of 2000 levels by the year 2050;

Whereas in the United States and most countries, global warming costs are not currently paid by the polluters of greenhouse gases—a failure of competitive markets which leads to the overuse of carbon-emitting energy and the under-production of carbon-free energy;

Whereas in the United States alone, over a billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions could be eliminated each year at a profit through energy efficiency measures by 2030, avoiding the construction of hundreds of power plants;

Whereas renewable energy tends to have higher up-front construction costs and low or zero fuel costs and fossil energy has an opposite cost structure, resulting in a higher number of jobs per unit of energy generated from renewable energy than conventional fossil fuels;

Whereas IRENA aims to promote a rapid transition towards the widespread and sustainable use of renewable energy on a global scale by bringing together stakeholders from the energy industry, academia, government, and non-governmental institutions, and in cooperation with existing organizations and networks already engaged in similar missions, to provide consultative support to member countries, help improve regulatory frameworks and capacity, and facilitate access to best practices, effective financial mechanisms, technological expertise, and data on renewable energy and resource potential;

Whereas 75 countries signed the International Renewable Energy Agency Statute on January 26, 2009, in Bonn, Germany, thereby founding the agency; and

Whereas the United States may still become a founding IRENA member country, eligible to nominate a Director General and bid to host the IRENA headquarters on United States territory, if it signs the founding statute by April 30, 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States, as soon as practicable, should seek to join the International Renewable Energy Agency.

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