

For Immediate Release
March 19, 2008

For More Information Contact
Karl Gawell, 202-454-5264
Leslie Blodgett, 202-454-5261

Renewable Industry Association Asks Congress to Direct DOE To Follow New Law

Washington, DC—The Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) today urged the House Appropriations Committee to direct the Department of Energy (DOE) to begin implementing legislation creating a new advanced geothermal research program passed by Congress in December. “Unfortunately, the Department of Energy’s (DOE) budget submission for FY 2009, does not appear to implement the new research initiative authorized by Congress,” GEA’s Executive Director, Karl Gawell, told the legislators.

At issue is the *Advanced Geothermal Energy Research and Development Act of 2007* passed as part of the 2007 energy bill. The legislation “defines a bold new vision of public-private partnerships and federal research and information initiatives that could help bring substantial new geothermal energy sources online to meet national energy needs,” according to GEA.

Congressional action on geothermal research was at least in part a response to efforts by the Administration to terminate all federal geothermal research, as proposed in their FY 2007 and FY 2008 budgets. But, Congress rejected the Administration’s proposals to close the program. Last December Congress approved \$20 million for DOE’s geothermal research efforts in FY 2008 as part of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

A few days earlier Congress passed national energy legislation, H.R.6, which contained the new research program for advanced geothermal technologies. At the time, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid told his colleagues “...with the Senate’s passage of the omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2008 and H.R. 6, the Energy Security and Independence Act of 2007, the Department of Energy must now finally understand that its irrational hostility toward geothermal energy research and development has come to an end.”

Last month, a bipartisan group of a dozen Senators led by Senators Wyden (D-OR) and Murkowski (R-AK) sent Secretary Bodman a letter urging DOE to move forward immediately with the new geothermal research law. “An important part of the Energy Independence and Security Act, HR 6, are the provisions that authorize and direct the Department of Energy to undertake a broad, new advanced geothermal energy research program,” the Senators told Bodman. “These provisions were based upon legislation that had strong, bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate...” they added.

In their statement today, GEA urged Congress to “direct the DOE to implement the new law and to provide adequate funding to achieve its goals.” The association proposed funding for the program should be \$77.5 million in FY 2009.

While DOE's budget proposal for FY 2009 included funding for geothermal research, it would fund only work on enhanced geothermal systems and ignore many other opportunities to expand geothermal energy production, according to GEA.