

US House of Reps approves solar energy bill

The US House of Representatives has approved a bill that authorises billions of dollars in research funds for solar energy. The measure provides a roadmap for solar research and development efforts at the US Department of Energy. The House passed the bill 310 votes to 106. The bill requires DOE to create a coordinated plan for encouraging technologies including solar power, solar manufacturing, solar heating and cooling and the integration of solar technologies into buildings. DOE will appoint a so-called Solar Technology Roadmap Committee, made up of representatives from the industry, academia and federal and state agencies, which will be tasked with directing federal funding for solar research and development. Within 18 months of enactment, this panel is required to complete a plan for solar R&D investment in the short, medium and long-term. The plan governs at least 30 per cent of DOE's solar R&D funding in 2012, a share that would increase to 75 per cent in 2015. "More solar technology means better energy security, more home-grown energy, and lower greenhouse gas emissions," says House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

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