

The PROGRESS Act

“Program for Real Energy Security” Act

Achieving energy independence is critical to strengthening America’s national, economic and environmental security, as well as to successfully combating global warming. To make progress toward that end, we must initiate a major national effort to make substantial gains in technology, conservation and vehicle efficiency, and the use of alternative fuels. That is precisely what the PROGRESS Act, introduced by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and other leading Democrats, is intended to do. The proposals in this legislation are designed to complement Speaker Pelosi’s Innovation Agenda, and the Rural Working Group’s Biofuels Plan. The bill includes provisions that would:

- **Establish a National Energy Security Commission.** The Commission would bring together government, industry and academic leaders to develop consensus national goals that respect regional energy solutions. The Commission would develop recommendations to Congress that would have to be acted upon under expedited rules. The fact is, despite all the expertise on energy issues across government, the private sector and academia, there is no entity that brings such experts together in common cause.
- **Establish a New Manhattan Center for High Efficiency Vehicles.** This proposal would establish an advanced vehicle efficiency consortium and double the federal commitment to federal alternative fuels and vehicle technology programs in the federal government. The effort would revitalize the goals of the Partnership of New Generation of Vehicles from the 1990s to build on current hydrogen and fuel cell work with a focus on battery, advanced diesel and variable compression engines, plug-in electric hybrids, and other vehicle programs. The result would be widespread availability of technologies that can double the current average vehicle efficiency, diversify types of fuels, and continue to develop the future of fuel cells and hydrogen from sustainable and renewable resources.
- **Establish a National Biofuels Infrastructure Development Program.** Vehicles that run on ethanol and biodiesel are being produced. But we must develop biofuel infrastructure – not just retail pumps but also wholesale distribution and transportation infrastructure. This grant program would reimburse private-sector partners to share the costs of investing in wholesale and retail biofuel pumps, tanks and related distribution equipment. The program would also leverage matching grants from state and local governments designed to encourage the spread of alternative fuels.
- **Promote Transit Use & Develop a Rail Infrastructure Program.** To get biofuels to market and secure an affordable and reliable energy supply, this legislation calls for a stimulus package of infrastructure investment that upgrades the “pipeline” for biofuels – the freight rail system. It also provides grants to promote conservation alternatives such as public transit and commuter rail.
- **Ensure Federal Government Leadership in the Use of Alternatives to Oil.** The federal government is one of the leading owners of vehicle fleets and consumers of petroleum products. The government must lead by example. Thus, this bill would increase the use of alternative fuels in federal fleets, spread pilot biofuel plants around the country and speed development of national standards to allow industry to build toward the same targets.