

Rep. McNerney Step It Up Statement

Thank you for the invitation to address Step It Up. I wish I could be with you in person, but I appreciate the opportunity to offer a few words of thanks for everything you do.

Before entering Congress, I spent much of my professional career designing renewable energy systems as a wind power engineer. I had never held elected office before, and one of the main reasons that I decided to run for Congress was my deep frustration with our nation's energy and environmental policies. Our previously elected leadership refused to acknowledge the risk presented by global warming, or to seize the opportunity to develop new energy sources and create good jobs. Like all of you here today, I wanted to do my part to move our country in a better direction. I'm proud that as a member of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, I am able to fight for a greener future every day.

The new Congress recognizes the importance of our energy and climate challenges and we're dedicated to solving these issues. One of the first votes I cast was for the CLEAN Energy Act of 2007, which reverses billions of dollars in unnecessary tax subsidies for big oil and gas companies and uses the savings to invest in renewable energy development.

I am also particularly pleased to have introduced my own energy legislation, the Advanced Geothermal Energy Research and Development Act. Geothermal energy is derived from the earth's natural heat, making it completely renewable, 100 percent domestic, and constantly available. My bill encourages the research and development of EGS, or Enhanced Geothermal Systems.

To utilize EGS, engineers drill into the earth and create crevices in the hot rock. Engineers pump fluid through the crevices and ultimately extract heat energy from the fluid. Leading researchers believe that EGS can potentially generate 100 gigawatts of power – enough electricity for 75 million homes in the next 50 years. EGS is not yet fully developed, and my bill will help to advance this promising resource.

Following up on our progress, the House passed a comprehensive energy package this summer to stimulate the use of renewable energies. Of particular importance, the package includes a renewable energy standard requiring that 15% of our country's electricity will come from renewable sources by 2020. This standard guarantees that good intentions will translate into real results. I am also proud that my geothermal bill was included in this package, as well as language I helped craft to increase professional training for the green sector jobs our legislation will create. This country has tremendous potential for job growth through the development of sustainable energy, and I am confident that the package we passed will help us achieve energy independence, combat climate change and create good-paying jobs here at home.

Although developing clean energy technologies and bringing them to market is a vital part of tackling energy independence and global warming, by itself, it is not enough. As

everyone here knows, it's also essential to limit our emissions of greenhouse gases. That's why I am a cosponsor of the Safe Climate Act, groundbreaking legislation to establish an economically responsible cap and trade system to reduce emissions. If this bill becomes law, carbon emissions will dramatically decline over the next fifty years.

Another topic of critical importance is education. We need to provide the best possible education so that our children will be able to lead in the worldwide innovation necessary to meet this global challenge. In Congress, I will continue fighting for responsible measures to limit environmentally harmful practices.

While policies in Washington are vitally important, I also know that they would mean nothing without your activism and support. I would like to thank you for being here today and for always working for a better, greener America. Parents, teachers, small businesses, innovators, and community leaders like you hold the keys to our country's future. Together, we are building a greener, healthier tomorrow.