

ENERGY SCIENCES COALITION

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Prominent Business, Academic and Scientific Groups Call on Next President to Invest in Basic Research and Make U.S. a World Leader in New Energy Technologies

September 17, 2008 – More than 70 business, higher education, and scientific organizations today released a petition to be delivered to both Presidential campaigns calling on the next President to propose and implement a comprehensive basic energy research initiative to help lead the country toward long-term energy security.

Spearheaded by the Energy Sciences Coalition and The Science Coalition, the petition was signed by a diverse group that included the American Chemical Society, Microsoft Corporation, the Semiconductor Industry Association, and more than 40 major research universities.

Noting that both presidential campaigns have focused on immediate steps to address the nation's current energy crisis, the petition asserts that these measures alone are unlikely to produce energy sources that will meet the nation's and the world's long-term demand for abundant, environmentally friendly energy. A major investment in basic research is needed, the petition says, to produce the technological advances and train the next generation of scientists and technicians that will meet the long-term energy challenge.

“The need for abundant sources of environmentally friendly and affordable energy far exceeds the capacity of currently available technologies,” the petition states. “Successfully developing and deploying a diverse and sustainable portfolio of new cutting-edge energy solutions will require basic research that produces scientific advances that leapfrog current technologies.” Such breakthroughs, the petition notes, will depend upon government support for basic research and a coordinated strategy across all federal research agencies.

The petition continues, “No nation is better equipped than the United States to lead the development of the energy advances that will meet not only our future energy needs but those of the entire world...”

Specifically, the petition calls for:

- Increased federal support for basic energy research across government research agencies, including full funding of the America COMPETES Act;
- A multi-agency strategy to coordinate basic energy research efforts across federal research agencies;
- Support for basic energy research in the physical sciences and engineering as well as in social and behavioral sciences, economics, and complex systems;
- New educational efforts to create the talent base required to create a clean-energy future;
- Increased support for high-risk, high-payoff basic energy research; and
- Better connections between government-sponsored basic and applied energy research programs to ensure the quick transfer of basic research discoveries to the commercial market.

The petition was released to coincide with a Washington, D.C., press conference on basic energy research sponsored by The Science Coalition and the Task Force on the Future of American Innovation. Speakers at the event echoed many of the points contained in the petition and emphasized that the United States can and should lead the world in developing and deploying new, sustainable energy solutions. Speakers included Susan Hockfield, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Uma Chowdhry, Chief Science and Technology Officer at DuPont; David Bell, President of Intersil Corporation; and Steven Chu, Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

The Energy Sciences Coalition (ESC) is a broad based coalition of organizations representing scientists, engineers and mathematicians in universities, industry and national laboratories who are committed to supporting and advancing the scientific research programs of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and in particular, the DOE Office of Science.