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NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY INITIATIVE DRAWS CAPITOL HILL CROWD EXPERTS HOPE TO INFORM CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 1– Energy experts representing a consensus effort to create a more inclusive national energy plan led a packed Capitol Hill briefing on energy policy Wednesday, June 26. The briefing was intended to reframe the discussion on reconciling divergent House and Senate energy bills and to improve the Congress's future energy policy efforts. The panel of energy experts spoke on the National Energy Policy Initiative (NEP Initiative), a project intended to result in an energy system that will not run out, cannot be cut off, that supports a vibrant economy, safeguards our health and environment and can command wide support.

The briefing was designed to help members and staffers of both parties and both houses to interpret the work of the Conference Committee, which will attempt to arrive at a single energy bill to send to the President. The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI, www.eesi.org), an influential bipartisan group, sponsored the event.

Congressmen Mark Udall (D-CO) and Zach Wamp (R-TN), co-chairs of the House Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus, provided opening remarks. Physicist Amory Lovins, CEO of Rocky Mountain Institute, introduced the audience to the consensus-based process behind the NEP Initiative. Jack Riggs, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy for the Department of Energy and Bruce Smart, retired Chairman and CEO of Continental Group and former Undersecretary of Commerce, discussed the Initiative's implications for reconciling the House and Senate energy bills currently in conference, and for future Congressional efforts to form a national energy policy.

Lovins said it's impossible to speculate at this time what influence the NEP Initiative or the briefing will have on the Conference Committee that will attempt to reconcile the two bills, but said he's heard positive things. "We're getting good feedback and momentum is building," he said.

Attendance at the briefing was much greater than anticipated, with a standing-room-only crowd of about 175 legislative staffers, members of public interest organizations, energy industry representatives, and interested citizens bursting through the door before the tables and chairs were set up for the panelists. Discussion was lively, and all the available copies of the NEP Initiative *Expert Group Report* and CD-ROMs were snatched up.

Udall said, "I was pleased to have the opportunity at last week's briefing to highlight the important work of the Rocky Mountain Institute and its contributions to the National Energy Policy Initiative. Whether or not Congress produces an energy bill this year, the NEP Initiative's process and outcomes are worthy of our careful consideration."



Asked about the briefing, Udall said, "It was instructive for me and I think for all the attendees, to learn more about the process that produced the NEP Initiative. Assuming we share a common vision of preserving our environment, our security, and the future for our children, I'd like to believe that Congress is capable of reaching a similar kind of consensus on energy policy."

The NEP Initiative *Expert Group Report* was the result of an intensive weekend conference in February in which 22 independent senior-level energy experts reached a strong consensus on vision, goals, and strategy for a national energy policy. The panel was brought together by the efforts of Rocky Mountain Institute, of Snowmass, Colo., and Consensus Building Institute, of Cambridge, Mass. Additional energy specialists signed on after the consensus statement was published. The NEP Initiative report suggested a framework that could improve U.S. security, prosperity, and environmental quality, simultaneously and without compromise.

The *Expert Group Report* was first presented on the Hill March 14 by Sen. Jeff Bingaman, (D-NM) and Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD). Half of the NEP Initiative's 33 endorsers are current or recent senior executives of the energy industries. The other half are distinguished former public sector officials, including two advisors to the President, a CIA director, two deputy secretaries of energy, five subcabinet officials, a House staff energy chair and his deputy, two senior economists from the President's Council of Economic Advisors, and former chairs or members of two federal and three state energy regulatory commissions.

For more information on the NEP Initiative and the EESI briefing, please visit

www.nepinitiative.org.