

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett Warns About Promise vs. Potential of Sustainable Biofuels
Featured Speaker at Biomass 2009: Fueling our Future Department of Energy Conference

Washington, Mar 17 -

Congressman Roscoe Bartlett discussed the “Promise vs. Potential of Sustainable Biofuels” at the Department of Energy’s Biomass 2009: Fueling Our Future Conference today. Congressman Bartlett is a senior member of the House Science and Technology Committee. He is also a well-respected expert on energy because of his expertise and professional experience as a scientist, engineer, and a farmer. A copy of his presentation is available upon request.

Congressman Bartlett warned against widespread unrealistic expectations and unsustainable mandates by Congress for biofuels under the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) expanded in the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA). Congressman Bartlett cited a prescient 1958 speech by Admiral Hyman Rickover as well as studies by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) and the Biomass Research and Development Initiative (Br&Di) that found sustainable biomass harvesting to produce liquid fuel substitutes could displace only a small fraction of Americans’ consumption of conventional petroleum-derived gasoline and diesel.

Congressman Bartlett said that Americans need to know that it is possible to live better, more secure, more prosperous lives while reducing our dependence upon imported oil. However, he said that to achieve all of these goals will require inventing, learning and adopting new ways to use less energy, particularly liquid fuels.

Congressman Bartlett urged policy makers and other leaders to challenge Americans to use our incomparable can-do spirit, innovative creativity and entrepreneurship to promote conservation and energy efficiency as imperative steps as a result of “peak oil,” inevitable declines in conventional petroleum production. He cited statistics from both the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Energy Information Administration (EIA) of the Department of Energy that world conventional oil production has been short of meeting increasing demand and was at a plateau after 2004.

Congressman Bartlett said that conservation and energy efficiency are among five steps of an achievable strategy to a sustainable energy future. The others are to diversify and transition from fossil-fuels to alternative and renewable energy sources; to increase the proportion of domestic energy sources; and to reduce negative environmental impacts of energy production and consumption.

###