



NEWS RELEASE

ORRIN HATCH

United States Senator for Utah

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HATCH HOPING TO DRIVE PLUG-IN HYBRID TECHNOLOGY
Speech with National Press Club explores alternative-fuel cars

Washington — Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) extolled the virtues of plug-in hybrid technology, which promises electric-gas cars powered via standard wall sockets, in a speech to the National Press Club today. The press conference kicked off the Plug-In Partners campaign (www.pluginpartners.org), a national coalition of cities seeking to reduce dependency on foreign oil while improving environmental standards.

Although plug-in cars are not currently on the market, the Plug-In Partners support development of more advanced alternative-fuel automobiles. The group recognized Hatch for his CLEAR ACT (Clean Efficient Automobiles Resulting from Advanced Car Technologies), which Congress passed last summer.

The CLEAR ACT provides, among other items, tax credits for purchasing alternative-fuel vehicles to help drive the market beyond current hybrid technology, creating marketable plug-in and eventually fuel cell vehicles.

A full copy of Hatch's remarks follow:

I want to thank Mayor Will Winn of Austin, Austin Energy, and the Plug-in Partners Coalition for holding this important event today and for asking me to say a few words.

As you know, I was the author of the CLEAR Act, which was included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, signed into law this summer and currently being implemented by the Administration. The CLEAR Act stands for the Clean Efficient Automobiles Resulting from Advanced Car Technologies Act. It provides attractive tax credits to consumers who purchase alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles, including battery electric and hybrid cars. This new law also provides tax incentives for new alternative fuel stations and for the use of alternative fuels in vehicles.

As with most tax incentives, the CLEAR Act tax credits will sunset after a few years, and they may not be available by the time a commercial plug-in hybrid is available to consumers. However, in the meantime, CLEAR Act Credits will promote those advanced technologies necessary to make plug-in hybrids commercially viable as they are being used and perfected in the hybrid cars on the road today.

Six years ago when I joined with environmental groups and automakers to write the CLEAR Act, we strongly believed that hybrids were an important answer to our nation's energy problems, and I think we have been proven right.

Today, I believe the next big step forward in our nation's energy strategy should be to develop commercially viable plug-in hybrids. We have proven that battery electric vehicles are technologically feasible, and that hybrid electric vehicles are very marketable.

By combining the popularity of hybrid electric vehicles with the added environmental and energy benefits of a battery electric technology, we may very well be able to produce a silver bullet for our nation's transportation needs. Let's not forget that two-thirds of all of our oil is consumed in the transportation sector. To improve our nation's energy security and air quality, we must focus on these types of solutions.

So I add my voice to those you have already heard today. I believe it is in our nation's interest to promote the accelerated development of commercially available plug-in hybrids. The world demand for energy is well above the world supply. Moreover, the growth in energy demand is rising steadily, while new oil discoveries are dropping dramatically. The world is heading for an energy crunch, and we need the equivalent of a space race to find real solutions, if we hope to avoid a global disaster.

In terms of the transportation energy supply problem, I believe that no solution holds more short-term promise than plug-in hybrids. In my view, it should be the policy of this nation to become the world leader in the development of this important technology, and I pledge to lend my support to this goal. Thank you.

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