

October 22, 2009

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ben Ray Luján voted for the Solar Technology Roadmap Act, which will encourage job creation and innovation in the clean energy industry. Rep. Luján is a cosponsor of the legislation, which would require the Secretary of Energy to develop a comprehensive process for creating a roadmap for solar research and development activities. The Solar Technology Roadmap Act passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 310 to 106.

“New Mexico has tremendous capacity to become a leader in solar energy production,” said Rep. Luján. “We have over 300 days of sun a year and a recent study by the American Wind Energy Association found that New Mexico ranks second in the nation for potential solar-energy capacity. With this opportunity on the horizon, we must seize the chance for our country to lead. The Solar Technology Roadmap Act provides this opportunity. The roadmap lays out a clear plan for identifying our country’s solar technology research and development needs and developing a path to make solar technology dependable and widely available. By developing a comprehensive plan to support solar technology we can encourage job creation and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.”

The Solar Technology Roadmap Act would cover a broad range of important research areas,

including solar power, solar manufacturing, solar heating and cooling, and integration of solar technologies into buildings. It would incorporate expertise from both the public and private sectors to provide recommendations on ways to address short-term, mid-term, and long-term research and development needs. The Solar Technology Roadmap Act will provide resources to our academic institutions and our national laboratories for research, development, and demonstration of advanced techniques for manufacturing a variety of solar energy products.

During the Committee process, Rep. Luján successfully included an amendment to the Act that would expand the long distance transmission research and development provision of the Solar Technology Roadmap. Rep. Luján's amendment will encourage the development of advanced direct current and superconducting technologies that have the potential to carry high levels of power over long distances.

"The development of direct current and superconducting long distance transmission technology can promote energy efficiency and reliability, so that any part of the country--including remote locations--can access the solar resources abundant in states like New Mexico," said Rep. Luján. "Superconducting materials have very little electrical resistance and can carry large amounts of electricity with minimal electricity loss. However, superconducting transmission technology is still largely developmental and most superconducting electrical lines have only been used for short distances. Direct current transmission also reduces risk of electricity loss from the line and can move large amounts of electricity from one point to another. Development of these two technologies has the potential to benefit the long distance transmission of solar energy."