

Mr. Sensenbrenner's Opening Statement for Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming hearing: "Blowing in the Wind: Renewable Energy as the Answer to an Economy Adrift."

As I've said many times, promoting and advancing technology must be a key part of any global warming or energy security policy. And I am pleased that the Chairman has scheduled this hearing today on renewable energy technology.

This week, people came to Washington from all over the world to talk about renewable energy. President Bush addressed the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference yesterday, not to mention the scores of other government and business leaders who are here to examine the future of worldwide renewable energy production.

The reason everyone is talking about renewable energy production is because of its future role as a vital part of the world's economy. Traditional fossil fuels are, and will remain, a key source of worldwide energy production. But just like a strong investment

portfolio includes a diverse group of stocks and bonds, future energy portfolios should include a diverse array of energy technologies, including fossil fuels, renewable energy and nuclear power.

On that point, I'm happy that the Chairman has also scheduled a hearing for next week on nuclear energy technology. Nuclear power is clean, safe and produces no greenhouse gases. It too must be part of a diverse energy portfolio.

But diversity is the key. When it comes to energy security or environmental protection, different energy technologies work better in different places. Each has benefits and drawbacks.

For example, wind energy is a promising source of clean, renewable power. But the wind doesn't blow consistently, and some areas are better for wind power than others. As Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne noted at the conference yesterday,

wind farms can harm bird populations, some of which are already under stress. The Audubon Society has noted that the average population of common birds has declined 70 percent since 1967.

So placing wind farms in places that will harm bird populations does not advance the cause of renewable energy, Secretary Kempthorne said, and I agree.

In the right places, wind farms will be a great source of renewable energy. But this shoe doesn't fit every footprint.

Likewise, solar power is a great resource, but mostly in areas where large tracks of land are available for use and the sun shines consistently. These should be just two options in a diverse energy portfolio.

The Energy Information Administration recently reported to the Senate its projections for future energy production, and use of

renewables in the U.S. will nearly double by 2030. But even then, renewable energy won't produce as much electricity as nuclear power currently does. And nuclear power only accounts for about 20 percent of the nation's electricity production. That is why maintaining diverse energy resources is a top priority.

By focusing on energy technologies like renewables and nuclear, combined with energy efficiency, the U.S. can meet many of the principles I believe are vital for any global warming policy. These technologies can help produce verifiable environmental benefits. And development of these technologies can help create jobs and improve the economy, which everyone agrees is a good thing.

I thank the witnesses for coming to enlighten us about the status of these technologies and I look forward to learning more about them.

####