

For Immediate Release
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CRAIG AND FEINSTEIN INTRODUCE BILL TO ADVANCE NEW ENERGY SOURCE

WASHINGTON DC - Senators Larry Craig (R-ID) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced today the Fusion Energy Sciences Act of 2001, a bill to strengthen the fusion program at the Department of Energy and speed up planning for the next major step in fusion energy science development.

"It is critical that we focus our efforts on developing and refining promising new sources of environmentally friendly energy, and this bill expands our efforts to develop this promising source. If we can successfully harness the energy released by the joining of atoms, fusion will be close to an ideal energy source, because it emits zero air pollutants and its fuel source, hydrogen, is in nearly unlimited supply," said Senator Craig.

"Fusion is a safe, almost inexhaustible energy source with major environmental advantages. As a co-sponsor of this legislation, I hope to see fusion move quickly from an experiment in the lab to a reality for our homes and businesses," Senator Feinstein said. **"While I work on the short-term problems in California, I join my colleague from Idaho on this bill to develop a key long-term solution to our current energy problems."**

Simply put, fusion is the combining -- or fusion -- of two small atoms into a larger atom: when two atomic nuclei fuse, tremendous amounts of energy are released. Fusion is the energy source that powers the sun and the stars, and has promising potential to contribute a strong source of safe, reliable environmentally sound energy to our nation's domestic energy supply.

With the differences of opinion about the causes of our current energy problems and what the solutions are, Craig and Feinstein say there is general consensus that energy forms a vital link to our economic prosperity and continued investment in new technology is crucial. This bill assures that as short term energy needs are sorted out, a strong focus remains on long term investment in fusion energy, which has the potential to help secure our energy future.

Representatives Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and Mike Simpson (R-ID) are cosponsors of the companion legislation (HR1781) in the House of Representatives.