WASHINGTON, DC— Congressman DeFazio (D-Springfield) was joined today by the other Democratic members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation in sending a letter to Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, urging him to invest in wave energy technology.

“Wave energy is a revolutionary industry—and one for which the technology is available and ready for commercialization. And, because a large percentage of the population lives near a coastline, generating energy near this population makes perfect sense,” DeFazio said. “However, the industry is in its infancy. Department of Energy can play an important role in supporting the developing wave energy industry. I hope Secretary Chu will consider wave energy as he develops plans for our country’s renewable energy future.”

The letter is available below :

October 15, 2009

The Honorable Steven Chu

Secretary

Department of Energy

1000 Independence Ave

Washington, DC 20585-0001

Dear Secretary Chu:

Since your appointment, you have demonstrated a deep commitment to investing in our country's renewable energy future. We applaud you for this, and we are grateful that you understand how vital these industries are to our nation's well-being.

We are also interested in ensuring that wave energy, another emerging renewable energy technology, receives the attention it deserves in the Department of Energy's stimulus spending. We were disappointed that the Administration cut the 2010 request by $10 million for Water Power Research and Development to $30 million. We believe congressional intent was clear with the 2010 Energy and Water Conference Report boosting funding to $50 million, indicating clear support for a robust water power program that includes wave energy.

Wave energy is a revolutionary industry—and one for which the technology is available and ready for commercialization. By harnessing the immense power of the naturally occurring oceanic waves, we believe that wave energy can eventually supply electricity to millions of Americans.

Since a large percentage of the population lives near a coastline, generating energy near this population makes sense. The technology has the capacity to employ large numbers of people in a variety of fields, from technological development to service and repair of equipment. Oreg on,
and the United States more generally, has the capacity to play a pioneering role in the worldwide development of wave energy. Oregon is an ideal location for wave energy conversion based primarily on its tremendous wave resources and coastline transmission capacity. DOE has already recognized this fact by selecting Oregon State University and its partner, the University of Washington, as one of two National Marine Renewable Energy Research Centers.

The wave energy industry, however, is still in its infancy. Just as the wind and solar industries benefited greatly from government support in their early years, the wave projects planned need similar support to move from research and development to commercialization. The Department of Energy can play an important role in supporting the developing wave energy industry. As the Department of Energy develops energy policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy independence, and put people back to work, we encourage you to seriously consider wave energy as a part of the overall energy solution. If we lose wave energy entrepreneurs to other countries more willing to invest in wave projects, we will miss an opportunity to play a leadership role in the development of wave energy.

We also encourage you to seriously consider deploying funds, including funds appropriated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), for wave energy projects that can be implemented and create jobs in the short term. There are already specific proposals for projects that can be deployed within the next year, resulting in commercialization within the

next few years, and creating hundreds of jobs in the process. We understand that a substantial wave energy installation will happen next year off the coast of Reedsport, Oregon. As an economically depressed part of the state, this region would greatly benefit in ways that directly meet the goals of ARRA.

We look forward to further discussing this issue with you, and hope that you or Undersecretary Johnson will consider meeting with industry leaders to discuss the overall potential of wave energy, its specific application in Oregon, and the merits of the projects being proposed.

Sincerely,

Rep. Peter DeFazio

Rep. Earl Blumeauer

Rep. Kurt Schrader

Rep. David Wu

Sen. Ron Wyden

Sen. Jeff Merkley