The Marine Energy Act

Marine energy technologies generate electricity using the natural power found in ocean waves, tides, currents, and temperature differences in ocean water. This nontraditional form of hydropower has the potential to fuel American homes and businesses with renewable electricity and address the very real challenge of climate change. Additionally, establishing a commercially viable marine energy industry in the United States would support a robust manufacturing and construction supply chain and create thousands of good-paying clean energy jobs.

The Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that marine energy could produce enough renewable energy to power more than 200 million American homes, which is nearly double the current number of U.S. housing units. Furthermore, with more than half of the U.S. population living within 50 miles of the coasts, there is vast potential for marine energy to efficiently provide clean electricity to communities across the country--from large cities to remote costal communities.

Because these promising marine renewable energy technologies are still in the early stages of development, federal support is needed to encourage private investments in marine energy projects, moving the United States closer to broad deployment of these innovative clean energy technologies.

The Marine Energy Act advances this research by reauthorizing DOE's marine renewable energy programs from 2018 through 2022. The bill also includes funding authorization for the national marine renewable energy research centers, which are located in Florida, Hawaii and the Pacific Northwest. These three centers make use of federal funding and the resources of five universities to test and refine various marine energy technologies. The bill also directs DOE to research ways of building a stable marine energy supply chain in the United States, as well as ways of harmonizing marine energy development with ocean navigation, fisheries, and critical infrastructure such as undersea cables.