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Sacramento, CA — With gas prices continuing to climb and the pipeline shutdown at Prudhoe Bay, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) highlighted SMUD and Sacramento RT's efforts to use energy efficient and alternative energy vehicles as examples of ventures the federal government should support and encourage, along with the need to invest in renewable energy research and development. By enacting the comprehensive, forward-thinking energy legislation she joined with her colleagues to introduce, we can begin to free our nation from its dependence on foreign oil. Joining the Congresswoman at the press conference were Supervisor Roger Dickinson, chairman of RT's Board of Directors, and Genevieve Shiroma, president of SMUD's Board of Directors. "Sacramento is already leading an effort to promote alternative forms of energy and transportation," stated Congresswoman Matsui. "Congress must now step up to the plate. This country desperately needs a strategic, forward-thinking national energy policy that encourages and directs resources to efforts like Sacramento's. Recent events only reinforce this need." As a Member of the Science Committee, Congresswoman Matsui has worked to modernize our nation's energy policy to increase energy efficiency and move toward increased use of renewable and alternative energy sources. If enacted, these initiatives would result in unprecedented federal commitment and resources toward the goal of attaining energy independence. In addition to an investment of federal dollars, the private sector would be encouraged to invest in the research and development of renewable energies through loan guarantees and tax incentives to make those technologies more affordable. Finally, this legislation would simulate demand and create a market for these technologies. In the immediate term, the Congresswoman called for the elimination of the subsidies and loopholes that provide billions for oil companies, stating "Each quarter these companies report record profits — they don't need any help from American taxpayers. Instead, these resources should go to working families to help cushion the economic impact of high energy prices." Fortunately, not everyone is waiting for Congress to act. Across the country, state and local governments are adopting ambitious efforts to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, including Sacramento. The region is a leader in alternative energy research and development, as well as using alternative energy technologies to make our cars, homes and businesses more energy efficient. Sacramento has responsible actors like SMUD and RT — already helping to move us toward energy independence. SMUD and RT are helping to create the market for vehicles that are energy efficient and run on clean technology. Congress needs to do more to support Sacramento's leadership and encourage other states and localities to follow Sacramento's lead. And through the energy initiatives Congresswoman Matsui supports, we would not only encourage Sacramento's efforts we can grow them. Concluded the Congresswoman, "Americans want Congress to address the challenges they're facing. They want a strategic, forward-looking energy policy the American people deserve. Achieving energy independence will not happen overnight. It will require a long-term sustained effort of the government, businesses and families. But it is a challenge worthy of such a commitment."

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