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House Approves Economic Recovery Plan With Renewable Energy Provisions

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By a vote of 244-188, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, an economic relief package that includes several measures designed to promote the production of solar energy and other forms of renewable energy, as well as improve the electric grid to better accomodate renewables.

"Action on this economic recovery package will create American jobs now, lay a foundation for long-term growth through clean energy, innovation and education, and includes strict accountability measures to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely and effectively," says House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md. According to Hoyer's office, the legislation will create or save 3 million to 4 million American jobs.

In the bill's version as voted on and described by the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, specific provisions in the package include \$11 billion for research and development of a smart grid; \$8 billion for loan guarantees related to renewable energy power generation and transmission projects; \$350 million for research into using renewable energy to power weapons systems and military bases; and \$2 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy research, development, demonstration, and deployment activities to foster energy independence, reduce carbon emissions, and cut utility bills.

The New York Times reports that Senate Democrats are currently preparing their own version of the bill to bring to the floor next week. "While the House and Senate measures are similar, they are most likely to differ in ways that could snarl negotiations between Democrats from the two chambers, and delay getting a measure to the president," the article notes.

SOURCES: Office Of Senate Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, U.S. House Appropriations Committee, New York Times

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