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US Fuel Cell Council

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Industry Urges Congress to “Stay the Course” on Fuel Cell Funding

*US Fuel Cell Council Outlines Steps Needed to Fulfill
President Bush’s Hydrogen Goals*

Washington D.C. – March 22, 2004 – The US Fuel Cell Council (USFCC) asked Congress today to increase federal funding for fuel cell and hydrogen research and demonstration programs and fund the nation’s core research programs before adding Congressional “earmarks.” The Council is the trade association of the fuel cell industry, comprising more than 115 companies, research institutions and others dedicated to fuel cell commercialization in the U.S.

“A robust competitive research and development program within the Department of Energy advances America’s transition to a hydrogen economy,” the Council said in letters to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Energy Appropriations Subcommittees, Interior Appropriations Subcommittees, and Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Appropriations Subcommittees. The letters strongly urge the committees to “stay the course” on fuel cell related funding. “America is poised to lead the world in fuel cell and hydrogen technology; however, other countries, particularly Japan, continue to gain on our progress.” The Council asked the Committees to:

→ *Fund the full Bush Administration program for hydrogen before adding earmarks.* The Council asked the Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittees to support \$93.3 million for hydrogen. The Council also expressed concern about the detrimental role that earmarks have had on the DOE’s core research programs for hydrogen. The diversion of more than \$35 million in FY 2004 to earmarked programs forced DOE to put its key competitively bid programs on hold. The USFCC requested that earmarks should be additive to the core hydrogen budget.

→ *Increase funding for low-temperature fuel cells for power generation and transportation to \$97.7 million.* The Interior Appropriations letters call for an additional \$20 million above the President’s budget request to bring total fuel cell funding in the Department of Energy’s Energy Conservation Budget to \$97.7 million.

→ *Restore the fuel cell power generation budget to levels approved by Congress in FY2004.* The Council opposed the proposed 68% cut in the Office of Fossil Energy’s Distributed Generation Systems budget request and asked the Interior Subcommittees to approve “level funding” of \$71 million.

→ *Restore Funding for Advanced Technology Program (ATP).* President Bush’s FY 2005 budget proposed to eliminate the Advanced Technology Program. USFCC’s letter to the Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Appropriations Subcommittees asked to restore full funding for the ATP program at the FY 2004 level of \$195 million, to support breakthrough research in fuel cells and other advanced technologies.

For more information on USFCC, visit our web site at www.usfcc.com.

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