



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
Introductory Statement
Alternative Energy: Lessons from Spain Briefing
December 3, 2009

Good morning. And welcome to all of you.

As co-chairman of the Congressional Friends of Spain Caucus, I want to begin by thanking everyone for joining us this morning to hear from several experts in the field of renewable energy. We are fortunate to have with us representatives from the Real Instituto Elcano, the Embassy of Spain, the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, and the Congressional Research Service.

I hope you will allow me a brief word of background about the Friends of Spain Caucus, which I am privileged to co-chair with Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart. The Caucus is in its infancy, having been established in the 110th Congress by Luis Fortuño—my predecessor as Resident Commissioner and the current governor of Puerto Rico—and by Congressman Xavier Becerra. The goal of the Caucus is to bring together members from both parties to strengthen political, economic, and cultural ties between the United States and Spain.

Our two nations share a commitment to developing energy-efficient technologies, creating green jobs, and reducing dependency on foreign oil. Spain and the United States depend heavily on oil as a source of energy; a significant amount of their energy consumption derives from this source. I believe there is a consensus among scientists and policymakers in both countries regarding the need to diversify energy sources through the establishment of sensible and well-rounded energy policies.

Spain has been at the forefront of this effort, now generating nearly 25 percent of its electricity from renewable sources; by contrast, the United States generates only 7 percent of its electricity from these sources. Today, we seek to explore the policies that have helped Spain develop such a vibrant alternative energy sector, and are excited to have with us Juan Jose Sanchez Dominguez, policy advisor to the Spanish Secretary of State for Climate Change. His presentation will explain the Spanish Renewable Energy Plan. Since its creation in 2005, Spain's Plan has established standards for energy development in Spain, with the goal that the country generate nearly 30 percent of its energy from renewable sources by the end of 2010. I am particularly looking forward to hearing about Spain's focus on solar and wind technology, which I believe have particular potential on the always sunny and very breezy island of Puerto Rico.

Our discussion today is timely because the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming estimates that, over the next twenty years, the United States will invest \$1.5 trillion dollars in its power sector. It is imperative that we analyze successful models as we design and build a new infrastructure for obtaining energy. Joining us to discuss whether and how Spain's policies can be applied in the United States are Richard Campbell, from the

Congressional Research Service, Jonathan Phillips, from the Select Committee, and Robert Murphy, for the Institute of Energy Research.

I am grateful for the panelists' participation in this briefing, and I hope you will find today's exchange of ideas useful and enjoyable.

Thank you again.