

WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

WASHINGTON - The federal government would do more to promote use of hydrogen fuel cells under legislation Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb., and other lawmakers plan to unveil today.

Promoters of hydrogen fuel cells say they hold promise as a way to achieve energy independence and improve security. But Terry said the high cost of hydrogen currently is deterring businesses.

The bill has two components aimed at advancing the fuel cells, devices that use a chemical reaction in which hydrogen and oxygen are combined to produce electricity and water:

- It would award tax credits to businesses to make up for the high cost of using hydrogen, while existing tax credits for using fuel cells would be extended.
- It would require fuel-cell powered backup electricity for all new federal government buildings. Terry said automakers have told him that investment in stationary fuel cells will lead to technological improvements that eventually could be used in vehicles.

"This isn't just about providing electricity in a building by using hydrogen," Terry said. "This is about getting to the generation of hydrogen fuel cells that can be used cheaply and efficiently in cars."

Although the cost of the proposal has not been officially calculated, Terry said he does not expect it to surpass \$1 billion. He said he believes those pushing the bill can find other programs within the Department of Energy to cover the cost.

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