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## *House of Representatives*

### **Electrify Africa Act of 2015**

Mr. SMITH ... Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding.

I want to congratulate Chairman ROYCE on the Electrify Africa Act as a companion bill to the legislation that we have before us today. We held a hearing in my subcommittee that KAREN BASS will remember well in November of 2014. The blessings that will accrue from a huge effort to electrify Africa are almost without limit, especially when it comes to health care and ensuring that students can have proper light to go to school and to study, particularly at night. All of the benefits that we take for granted in the United States and in other parts of the world still have yet to come to Africa.

In the 21st century, energy has become vital, as we all know, to modern societies. We no longer have to shop for food each day. Refrigerators keep food cold and preserved longer, whether in our homes, in restaurants, or during the process of transportation. Cell phones, computers, televisions, and other electronics require electrical power to allow us to lead more productive lives in the modern world and increasingly in the developing world. As we

have seen in the recent Ebola epidemic and in the current Zika virus epidemic, it is vital that medicines and plasma be kept cold so that they don't lose their potency. Of course, in the preservation of blood and so many other items that are essential to life, electricity facilitates their continuance and their potency.

It is unfortunate that the continent of Africa has so many people who have been denied the ability to enjoy the advances of science. Currently, only 290 million people out of about 914 million Africans have access to electricity and the total number lacking continues to rise.

Bioenergy, mainly fuel, wood, and charcoal, is still the major source of fuel, and as the chairman pointed out in his opening comments, it threatens the lives of so many people in Africa, including the eyesight of many of those who experience that.

On the other hand, hydropower accounts for about 20 percent of the total power supply in the region, but less than 10 percent of its estimated potential has been realized. Persistent drought in some areas makes hydropower unpredictable.

The Electrify Africa Act takes an all-of-the-above approach—all of these good prospects—in promoting the widest selection of sources of energy that includes all forms of fossil fuels, but also hydroelectric and renewable energy sources.

This facilitates African nations to use all available energy sources. Coal, which is

abundant in Africa, will be in the mix, and, hopefully, we can help them import clean coal technology to mitigate pollution.

Again, I thank the chairman for this legislation.

