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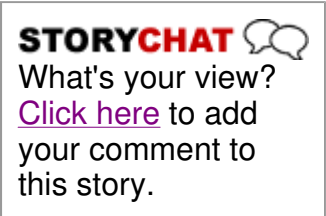
Inglis, Graham renew push for hydrogen prize

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By Ellyn Ferguson

WASHINGTON -- Two South Carolina lawmakers hope to convince Congress that taxpayer-funded prizes are a way to spur scientific competition to make hydrogen a feasible alternative to oil.

Rep. Bob Inglis, R-Travelers Rest, and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., dusted off their H-Prize Act legislation and re-introduced it this week.



The legislation died when the 109th Congress ended. It had passed the House 416-6 but stalled in the Senate.

Inglis said last year's bill hit a roadblock when the Republican chairman of a key committee said he thought it was redundant because the Energy Department has the authority to create such a competitive program if it chooses.

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The bill might get a better reception this year because the committee has a new chairman after Democrats took control of the Senate, Inglis said.

The legislation's goal is to stimulate competition to solve problems with production costs, storage and distribution that currently make hydrogen use as a fuel impractical.

South Carolina researchers are tackling some of those issues at the University of South Carolina, Clemson University and the Savannah River Site.

The bill would award:

- A total of \$20 million for developments in production, storage, distribution and use of hydrogen. Four \$1 million prizes every two years.
 - A total of \$20 million for working hydrogen-fueled vehicle prototypes. One prize of \$4 million every two years.
 - A total of \$10 million for a grand prize over the next 10 years plus a mix of federal and private money to match investment dollars for a breakthrough discovery that transforms hydrogen from a fuel of limited use to one of wide use.
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