

[Auto](#) » [News](#) » [Senators Upset Over Lack of Energy Department Auto Loans](#)

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At an Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing, several senators voiced their harsh opinions about the Energy Department's handling on their \$25 billion auto loan program.

Calling the program "virtually dormant," many were unafraid to voice their honest opinions about the Energy Department's recent decisions regarding the allocation (or lack thereof) of their allotted money for auto loans meant to help private companies go "green."

The \$25 billion program was created in 2007 and received government funding under the Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing initiative. The program's goal is to grant auto loans to private companies to develop more energy efficient vehicles. The [Energy](#)

[Department](#) has been given unfettered access to the money and the ability to deem which companies should receive a green auto loan.

But in the last four years only five loans have been originated. The recipients so far have been Ford, Nissan, Fisker, Tesla, and the Vehicle Production Group, totaling a mere \$8.4 billion in financing.

The dissent and slew of negative remarks at this recent hearing come after the Energy Department denied the energy-efficient company Carbon Motors' application for a green auto loan.

After working with the Energy Department for over 30 months and spending millions to comply to the Department's qualifications, the chairman Carbon Motors, William Santana Li, was fuming when his company rejected.

"I'm furious," Santana Li candidly said in a letter following the denial.

Such tight lending standards have led opponents to claim the Energy Department is making politically motivated decisions, and withholding the money before the upcoming presidential election, as to not make look the incumbent president look bad if the loans were to be misused.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan, said the program has become "bogged down," and is "defeating [its] purpose," according to the Huffington Post.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she has heard of many companies who have grown deeply frustrated over not being able to get an answer on whether or not they've received approval.

Others, such as Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, believe Congress should take a step back and take a new look at all of the Energy Department's loans programs.

While still others, such as Sen. Rand Paul, R-Kentucky, feel the green auto loan program is a waste, saying, "We need to get out of this business," in a Huffington Post article.

The negative attitudes expressed by the Senators may not be ungrounded either. Particularly after the remarks made by the Energy Department's secretary, Steven Chu, after administering the first few energy-efficient auto loans. "As secretary, I've been committed to getting these loans out the door as quickly as possible," he said, back on June 23, 2009. "Over the next several months, additional loans will be awarded to large and small automobile manufacturers," continued be a hollow statement that the state representatives have desired to see fulfilled.



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