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U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce Washington, DC 20515-6115

JOHN D. DINGELL, MICHIGAN
CHAIRMAN

October 3, 2007

MEETING THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

Dear Colleague:

Throughout 2007 the Committee on Energy and Commerce has taken the lead on two issues of great interest to the American public: energy independence and climate change. We began the year with an intensive set of hearings devoted to an examination of global climate change and then moved to the development of policies to enhance our energy security. The energy legislation reported by the Committee and passed by the House is expected to save more than 10 billion cumulative tons of CO2 through 2030. While this is an impressive achievement, it represents but one necessary component of a comprehensive climate change program.

Today we are releasing the first in a series of climate change white papers. The purpose of this effort is to focus the discussion in the Congress as we move towards the development and eventual passage of comprehensive climate change legislation. Leading scientists around the world agree that aggressive action must be taken to stabilize and then sharply reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, and that these actions must be taken soon. We believe that these white papers will hasten our efforts by focusing attention on specific design elements of a mandatory greenhouse gas control policy in a manner that ensures the quality of our work and promotes a broad consensus among interested parties.

Our goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions between 60 and 80 percent by 2050. This is an ambitious target and one that we believe is best achieved with a cap and trade system as the cornerstone of national policy. The white paper being released today discusses the overall benefits of a cap-and-trade system and suggests the sectors of the economy that should be included. It also raises a number of important points for discussion regarding policy details. Subsequent white papers will address other topics, including but not limited to: cap levels and timetables; costs containment mechanisms; carbon sequestration; offsets and credits; the role and obligations of developing countries; and the distribution of emissions allowances.

The white papers will contain a mixture of recommendations and issues for further discussion. We anticipate holding hearings on several of the topics raised by the white papers in order to receive detailed, constructive suggestions that may be used to craft legislative language.

Climate change is one of the most complex issues facing the Congress and the American people. This challenge demands careful attention to detail in order to craft a bill that will protect and preserve our environment in a manner that safeguards the U.S. economy. This series of white papers will bring us one step closer to achieving our goal.

This white paper is posted on the Committee on Energy and Commerce Web site at http://energycommerce.house.gov/Climate_Change.



John D. Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Sincerely,



Rick Boucher
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and
Air Quality