

Energy and Commerce Passes Economic Recovery Legislation

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce today approved an economic recovery package that will invest in clean energy technology, advance broadband internet access, increase health care coverage to Americans, and provide critical assistance to states.

“This legislation is an important step towards getting our economy back on track,” said Chairman Henry A. Waxman. “The largest section of this bill involves our investment in health. We need to help workers hurt by the recession by providing health insurance. And we need to strengthen a key safety net by increasing the federal contribution to Medicaid. Taking these steps — especially raising the federal Medicaid contribution — will keep states from decreasing spending and help our economy recover.”

Important Health Benefits, Improvements

The package would provide temporary subsidies to help families who have lost their jobs maintain their health care coverage through COBRA and create a temporary option for states to extend healthcare to displaced workers through their Medicaid programs. The package will also provide additional federal matching funds to help states maintain their Medicaid programs in the face of recession-driven revenue declines and caseload increases.

The package would also provide payment incentives to encourage the widespread adoption of Health Information Technology and establish standards for interoperability and privacy.

Investment in Broadband Internet Access

The broadband package authorizes the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) to distribute \$2.825 billion for wireless and wireline broadband through a grant program.

Investment in Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency

The energy package will accelerate deployment of smart grid technology, provide energy efficiency funds for the nation’s schools and hospitals, offer support for the nation’s governors and mayors to tackle their energy challenges, and establish a new loan guarantee program to keep renewable energy on track during the economic crisis. The provisions in the bill ensure that existing programs can be scaled up so that funds are invested promptly and effectively.

A full description of the hearing and legislation is available [here](#) .