

## Chairman Dingell, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality hearing entitled "Achieving - At Long Last - Appliance Efficiency Standards"

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY HEARING ENTITLED "ACHIEVING - AT LONG LAST -  
APPLIANCE EFFICIENCY STANDARDS"  
May 1, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing on the Federal program that establishes energy efficiency standards for appliances. As one who participated in enacting the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 that originally created this important program, I am perhaps more conscious than most of the degree to which we have wasted the opportunity to save energy from increased appliance efficiency in the 32 years since then.

Thirty percent of our electricity demand is attributable to residential electric appliances, which makes them indirectly responsible for about 15 percent of our national carbon dioxide emissions. We have improved their energy efficiency significantly without loss of performance, indeed with better performance. But we could have done so much better if we had adopted timely standards that met the statutory test of requiring the energy efficiency that was "technologically feasible" and "economically justified."

In March, we released the Government Accountability Office report on this topic that Chairman Boucher, Chairman Markey, and I had requested, as Chairman Boucher has already noted. The track record of this program has been a long series of derailments or trains that never left the station. I can think of no other critical energy program that has such a long history of failure to meet its objectives.

Now, however, we are seeing the early signs of new and effective leadership from Assistant Secretary Karsner, who is here to testify this morning. He has told us that he can and will meet the current deadlines for new standards. We will help him keep his promise.

But setting standards is only half the necessary commitment. They must also be the right standards. They must strike a demanding balance between first cost, cost of operation, and technical features to minimize energy consumption. In this way, our household appliances can help make a major contribution to meeting our climate challenge.

I appreciate the fact that the efficiency advocates and the appliance manufacturers have many times been able to find consensus on new standards, saving the time and uncertainties of waiting out the Department of Energy's rulemaking process. This is one way to get there, and we need to encourage more such consensus agreements.

We also need to review where changes in DOE's rulemaking process will lead to more effective implementation. I for one am ready to move quickly on legislative recommendations that emerge from this review. It has been 32 years since this program started; I would like to see DOE implementation fully up-to-date for all covered appliances.

For all of these purposes, this is a timely and important hearing, and I thank Chairman Boucher and the Subcommittee for undertaking it.

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