

Chairman Dingell at the Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality hearing entitled, "Climate Change: Perspectives of Utility CEOs"

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY
HEARING ENTITLED
"CLIMATE CHANGE:
PERSPECTIVES OF UTILITY CEOS"
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Today we welcome the heads of major utilities, including representatives of the independently owned utility sector, the municipal sector, and the rural cooperative sector of this important industry.

Each of these companies has a significant stake in the business of producing and providing to its customer electricity produced from our country's most abundant generation source — coal.

As we have learned in the Subcommittee's hearings to date, coal accounts for nearly 50 percent of the Nation's electricity mix and is thus critical to our energy security and independence. The U.S. is heavily reliant on coal, and no one seriously argues that we will not continue to need this fuel source to meet our future needs.

Yet it is equally clear that coal faces challenges as U.S. searches for ways to reduce its carbon emissions. The Subcommittee's March 6, 2007, hearing examined some of the difficulties and opportunities for using coal more cleanly, and nearly every week a new study on the topic comes forth.

The Subcommittee is fortunate to have among today's witnesses a number of companies that rely on coal and are seeking answers to the question of how to maintain and improve their service to customers, while at the same time being good stewards of the environment.

The witnesses today include chairmen of companies that have called for legislation to limit carbon emissions, a goal Chairman Boucher and I are working towards. Others are still formulating their positions, and we welcome their testimony as to the questions they confront and how they plan to limit the production of greenhouse gases.

I note that yesterday was the date on which Chairman Boucher and I requested responses to a letter we sent last month asking questions about greenhouse gas legislation. The responses are now coming in, and I would like to thank our witnesses and the organizations to which they belong for the work they put into those submissions. I am sure the information will be very helpful to the Committee in its future deliberations.

With that, I welcome our witnesses and look forwards to their testimony.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce
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