

## Chairman Dingell Comments on Earth Day

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NEWS RELEASE  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Dingell Comments on Earth Day  
Reflects on Progress Made, Challenges Ahead

Washington, D.C. — Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), the Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, today observed Earth Day and pledged to continue his work to protect the nation's air and water, address the issue of climate change and fight for a more prosperous economy for the American people.

"My father used to say that we borrow this Earth from those who come after us and we must return it in good condition," Dingell said. "Throughout my fifty-two years in Congress, I have strived to keep that axiom in mind. Earth Day provides us with a chance to take stock of the progress we have made in protecting our air, land and water, and to come together to take stock of the challenges before us."

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Citing the importance of the Great Lakes to Michigan and to all of the Midwest, Dingell reflected on progress that has

been made in helping to safeguard the nation's water supply. In particular, Dingell noted how the Clean Water Act of 1972 has helped to clean up and protect the nation's water supply by giving the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to set water quality standards and regulate discharges.

"Prior to the Clean Water Act, raw sewage and industrial waste were routinely dumped into rivers and streams, urban rivers posed a fire hazard, and, in Michigan's backyard, fishermen derisively dubbed Lake Erie 'the Dead Sea,'" said Dingell. "Thanks to the Clean Water Act, the number of rivers, lakes, and bays that are safe enough for fishing and swimming has doubled since 1972."

Going forward, Dingell said he would continue fighting to protect the nation's lakes, rivers, streams and waterways. Specifically, Dingell touted legislation that he has cosponsored to clarify that the Clean Water Act should apply to all waters of the United States.

"Recent Supreme Court decisions have confused the common understanding of the Federal government's jurisdiction over the Nation's waterways," Dingell said. "For this reason, I have joined with my colleagues, Jim Oberstar and Vern Ehlers, to introduce bipartisan legislation to restore protections that have been in place for more than thirty years."

Dingell also noted that he has joined with Great Lakes area lawmakers to promote the "Great Lakes Collaboration and Implementation Act," which would improve collaboration across the region and provide much needed funding to protect and restore the Lakes.

"The Great Lakes provide drinking water for our State and also boost our economy with badly needed tourism dollars," Dingell said. "It's clear that our Great Lakes need an area-wide, Everglades or Chesapeake Bay-style protection and restoration program in order to preserve this wondrous natural resource for future generations."

Dingell also discussed progress that has been made in improving the nation's air, through landmark legislation like the Clean Act of 1963 and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, legislation Dingell authored that added provisions for ozone depletion, toxic air pollution and acid rain.

Dingell said the next major area of air pollution that would need to be addressed is climate change, an issue upon which the Committee on Energy and Commerce is taking a lead role. Already, Dingell noted, important strides have been made.

"The 'Energy Independence and Security Act,' legislation Congress passed and the President signed into law last year, will improve efficiency in everything from light bulbs to light trucks," Dingell noted. "The energy efficiency provisions included in the law will remove 10.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by 2030, the equivalent of taking all cars, trucks, and planes off the road and out of the skies for five years."

“While this is a remarkable achievement, we have further to go,” Dingell added. “We are now preparing comprehensive climate change legislation that, when combined with last year’s bill, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 to 80 percent by the year 2050. The end result must be, and will be, a bill that protects our environment without putting the American economy at a disadvantage.”

The Committee on Energy and Commerce has held nearly twenty hearings on the issue of climate change since January of 2007. In addition, the Committee is issuing a series of Climate Change Legislation Design White Papers, which identify issues about which further information and discussion is necessary.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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