

Dingell, Stupak, Markey Call on DOJ to Respond to Inquiries on Wiretapping Program

Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, and Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), Chairman of the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee, today wrote to the U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey

NEWS RELEASE
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

For Immediate Release: December 6, 2007

Contact: Jodi Seth or Carrie Annand 202-225-5735

Dingell, Stupak, Markey Call on DOJ to Respond to Inquiries on Wiretapping Program

Washington, DC — Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, and Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), Chairman of the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee, today wrote to the U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey, calling on the Department of Justice (DOJ) to respond to previous requests for information about the Administration's wiretapping program.

"Our committee is responsible for overseeing the conduct of the telecommunications industry and protecting consumers. It would be irresponsible to grant blanket immunity to phone companies without knowing what, in fact, these companies have done," Dingell said. "At the end of the day, we may very well agree that carriers have not violated their customers' privacy rights or, we may conclude that the courts should continue sorting out these issues. But, we cannot make an accurate assessment, or sound public policy, without first having the facts."

Today's letter is part of an ongoing investigation by the Committee into the National Security Agency's (NSA) warrantless surveillance program. The Committee had previously written the major telecommunications carriers seeking information on their participation in NSA's wiretapping program. In their response, two of the carriers stated that the Department of Justice had instructed the carriers to neither confirm nor deny their role in the NSA's program.

These responses prompted Dingell and key Committee Members to request a briefing on the NSA's surveillance program by DOJ. The Department has not yet provided that briefing, even though the response was due on November 7th. Today's letter notes that until DOJ responds to the Committee's inquiries, the Committee will not consider requests that telecommunications companies receive immunity for their previous participation in the surveillance program.

"The Department of Justice's stonewalling is preventing Congress from determining whether or not Americans' right to privacy has been violated by the Administration's surveillance program," said Stupak. "We are being asked to grant immunity to phone and Internet companies, without even knowing what personal records were turned over to the Administration."

"Since their warrantless wiretapping program was uncovered almost two years ago, the White House has insisted it should be allowed, essentially, to go fishing without a license. I disagree and urge the new Attorney General respond to our letter. Retroactive immunity to corporations who cooperated with the warrantless wiretapping program should only be considered once Congress and the public learn the full truth about this program and any violation of Americans' constitutional rights," said Markey.

[Read the letter](#)

- 30 -

2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515