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NEWS RELEASE  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Washington, D.C. — Today, for the second time, the US House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation allowing states to curb the importation of foreign municipal waste. H.R. 518, the International Solid Waste Importation and Management Act of 2007, sponsored by Committee on Energy and Commerce Chairman John D. Dingell (D-MI), would implement the bilateral U.S.-Canadian Agreement concerning the transboundary movement of hazardous waste. H.R. 518, the International Solid Waste Importation and Management Act of 2007 passed the House by voice vote.

The bill was co-sponsored by the entire Michigan delegation and several members from the Committee on Energy and Commerce, which has jurisdiction over the issue.

“I am again pleased to tell the people of Michigan that we have passed a bill that will lessen both risks to public

health and the environment and make our borders safer," said Dingell. "While the Michigan delegation of the House has worked together to move this legislation forward, we have obstacles yet to surpass. I urge the Senate to take up H.R. 518 this spring."

In 1992, the U.S. and Canada agreed that the bilateral agreement would apply also to municipal solid waste. H.R. 518 requires the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to issue regulations to implement the agreement within two years. The bill also authorizes states to enact laws or issue regulations to control foreign municipal solid waste until the Administrator issues final regulations to implement the bilateral agreement. Any regulations or laws the State enacts can stay in effect after federal regulations are finalized.

Rep. Dingell has argued the Bush Administration should be complying with the "notice and consent" provisions of the bilateral agreement, which requires that both countries use "best efforts" in the absence of regulations. Canada is a party to the Basel Convention, which specifically prohibits signatories from exporting waste to a non-party like the U.S. The U.S.-Canadian bilateral agreement is the only convention allowing waste to travel between the two countries.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce passed H.R. 518 by voice vote on March 22, 2007.

In the 109th Congress, the International Solid Waste Importation and Management Act of 2006, passed the House by a voice vote, but was not considered by the Senate before the Congress adjourned.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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