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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce Markup of H.R. 515 and H.R. 1084 November 19, 2009

Today, the Committee considers two pieces of legislation.

The first bill we will be considering today is a bipartisan piece of legislation that will restrict the importation of low-level radioactive waste into the United States. The bill's sponsors – Mr. Gordon, Mr. Terry, and Mr. Matheson – have worked hard to craft a balanced bill. As a result, this bill has 80 co-sponsors, including Democrats and Republicans alike. At last count, 30 members of this committee are co-sponsors.

As a witness from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission pointed out during our legislative hearing on this bill, there is a pure policy question here that Congress needs to answer: should the U.S. be importing and disposing of low-level radioactive waste from other countries? This legislation ensures that the U.S. doesn't become a prime destination for the world's low-level radioactive waste. But it includes some sensible exceptions and a process by which the President can waive the prohibition to meet important national or international policy goals.

This isn't an anti-nuclear bill. On the contrary, it ensures that there is adequate disposal capacity for the radioactive waste produced by our domestic nuclear industry.

And this isn't a "not-in-my-backyard" bill. Utah is the likely disposal site for much of this imported waste. But Utah already disposes of 98% of our country's low-level radioactive waste. The state shouldn't be required to take radioactive waste from Italy, Brazil, and Mexico too.

The second bill we will be considering is also bipartisan. The Commercial Loudness Mitigation Act, or the CALM Act, would address a leading consumer complaint: the startling increase in volume we often experience when television programming goes to a commercial. The bill's sponsor – Congresswoman Eshoo as well as Subcommittee Chairman Boucher – has

worked tirelessly to bring together industry and consumer groups to resolve this issue. The bill has 82 cosponsors, including more than 15 members of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

I thank the sponsors of these bills for their efforts and encourage my colleagues to support the Radioactive Import Deterrence Act and the CALM Act. I'm looking forward to a productive markup.