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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce “HomeStar: Creating Jobs Through Energy Efficiency Retrofits” Subcommittee on Energy and Environment March 18, 2010

Thank you, Chairman Markey, and thank you for holding this hearing.

Today, our nation continues its courageous struggle to overcome the worst recession in 70 years. No sector of the economy has been harder hit than the home construction services sector. Today, more than one in four construction workers are unemployed – more than twice the national average.

We need these workers and their skills more than ever. We must seize the opportunity to modernize our homes and buildings and ensure their efficient use of energy. Ten percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to American buildings. Improving the efficiency of those buildings would allow us to reduce our carbon pollution and save money at the same time.

The HomeStar proposal is compelling because it addresses both of these problems simultaneously.

First, the proposal will put a lot of people back to work making our homes more energy efficient. At the same time, it can stimulate the manufacturing sector by increasing demand for energy efficient products. By some estimates, HomeStar will create more than 130,000 direct and indirect near-term jobs.

Second, HomeStar will cut our carbon pollution in the near term and be an important down payment for even more successful reductions in the future.

I want to commend Chairman Markey and Representative Welch for their leadership on this proposal. They have had the vision to see the tremendous economic and environmental benefits of nurturing energy efficiency retrofits into a major national undertaking. President Obama has lent his unequivocal support to this initiative.

We now have the opportunity in our Committee to make HomeStar a priority and deliver jobs and energy efficiency to America's housing and commercial office stock throughout the country.

I'd also like to welcome today's witnesses. Assistant Secretary Zoi, Governor Engler, Mr. Laseter, Mr. Thaman, and Mr. Pratt. I appreciate you joining us today and look forward to hearing your testimony.