FRED UPTON, MICHIGAN
CHAIRMAN

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6115

Majority (202) 225–2927
Minority (202) 225–3641

November 18, 2011

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield:

Last week, the International Energy Agency (IEA) issued the World Energy Outlook (WEO) for 2011. This annual publication is widely respected as an authoritative source of world energy market analysis and projections. WEO 2011 highlights IEA's finding that the world has just five years before a failure to shift to clean energy will commit the world to large temperature increases and likely devastating effects.[1] We request that you hold a hearing on the IEA's analysis and its sobering conclusions.

IEA conducted a country-by-country analysis of how much carbon pollution the world will emit over the coming decades from existing energy infrastructure in the power generation, industrial, transportation, and building sectors.[2] IEA assessed a "450 Scenario," which lays out the carbon emissions levels and policies necessary to maintain a 50% chance of keeping the temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius. IEA found that four-fifths of the total energy-related carbon emissions permissible under the 450 Scenario by 2035 are already "locked-in," as they

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[1] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2011* (Nov. 2011).

[2] *Id.*

will be emitted from existing infrastructure over the economic life of those facilities.[3] Power generation infrastructure, such as coal-fired power plants, are responsible for the majority of these locked-in emissions, due to the quantity of the carbon emissions that they release over their long lifetimes.[4] The analysis further found that unless stringent new action is taken soon, the energy infrastructure in place by 2017 will generate all the carbon pollution allowed under the 450 Scenario, meaning that any power plants or factories built after 2017 would need to be zero-emitting or offset by other reductions to avoid potentially catastrophic climate change.[5] Thus, IEA concluded, we have about five years to shift from traditional fossil fuel investments to clean, low carbon energy to avoid dangerous climate change.

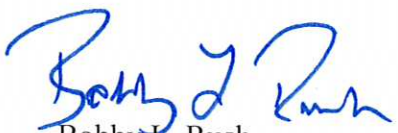
The IEA report also finds that "delaying action is a false economy."[6] For every one dollar of investment avoided in the power sector in this decade, over four dollars will need to be spent after 2020 to compensate for the increased emissions with more expensive, aggressive technologies and policies.[7]

The IEA report is an important new analysis that should inform the energy policies of every country. We urge you to hold a hearing on these significant findings to help inform members about the very short timeframe in which we must act to avoid committing the world to a devastating degree of climate change.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Power

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[3] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2011*, 40 (Nov. 2011).

[4] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2011,* 232 (Nov. 2011).

[5] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2011*, 40 (Nov. 2011).

[6] *Id.*

[7] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2011,* 235 (Nov. 2011).