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Opening Statement Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs, Stimulus Oversight and Government Spending Hearing on "Assessing the Impact of Greenhouse Gas Regulations on Small Business"

April 6, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Jordan and Ranking Member Kucinich.

In previous Committee hearings, I have emphasized in my opening remarks that effective regulatory review should include several elements: an examination of the costs and benefits, conclusions based on solid data, and input from a variety of sources.

I continue to support a comprehensive review of the impact of regulations, and I stand firm in my belief that any assessment of the cumulative impact of such regulations must take into account the benefits of those regulations – and not just the costs.

During today's hearing, we will discuss, and I am sure debate, the impact of greenhouse gas regulation on small businesses.

The majority seems to be of the opinion that neither Democratic members of Congress nor the Administration are concerned about small businesses or about the impact of regulations on small businesses when, in fact, this could not be further from the truth.

I am a dedicated advocate for small businesses. Each month, I hold information sessions for small businesses and women and minority-owned businesses in my District. At these information sessions, we work with those businesses to alert them to the opportunities available in the District, the State, and the Federal government.

Furthermore, from time to time, we hold special sessions on new business opportunities, such as green jobs. I do this because I know the challenges small businesses are facing and it is one of my highest priorities to help the small businesses in my state survive these difficult economic times and continue creating jobs.

I also understand that there can be regulatory measures that could limit the growth of small businesses – and I am concerned whenever such challenges are created.

That is why I appreciate the efforts that the EPA has taken to limit the impact of greenhouse gas regulations on small businesses. These efforts will shield literally millions of small businesses that generate only small emissions from having to comply with regulations they simply cannot afford.

That said, these greenhouse gas regulations are critically important, and the costs of inaction are simply unacceptable. A recent report by the National Academy of Sciences concluded that climate change will “pose risks for a wide range of human and environmental systems, including freshwater resources, the costal environment, ecosystems, agriculture, fisheries, human health, and national security, among others.” The report went on to explain that the “magnitude of climate change and the severity of its impacts depend strongly on the actions that human societies take to respond to these risks.”

As we in Congress wrestle with the deficit and debate what legacy we will leave for our children, we must also consider what our failure to properly regulate these harmful pollutants will mean for them and take appropriate regulatory actions to preserve our environment.

I thank the witnesses for appearing before this Committee today, and I yield back.

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