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RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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February 20, 2007

Dr. Ralph J. Cicerone
President, National Academy of Sciences
500 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Dr. Cicerone:

Congress is currently considering policies to address two separate but closely related issues: human-caused global warming and U.S. dependence on oil. I am writing to request that the National Academy of Sciences convene an expert panel and examine some of the key technological issues associated with one facet of these issues.

Recently, both the President and members of Congress have discussed proposals to boost the nation's production and use of biofuels and liquid fuels derived from coal. While federal support of these programs could likely have a significant impact on the levels of production and consumption of these fuels, we must be careful to chart our policies on the best information available in order to avoid unintended consequences. Of particular concern is the need to address U.S. dependence on oil while not exacerbating the problem of global warming.

I am requesting that National Academy of Sciences convene a panel, under the auspices of the National Research Council, and examine the environmental and economic advantages and disadvantages of various specific biofuel and coal-to-liquid technologies. Congress would benefit from the National Research Council's findings regarding what approaches are technologically feasible, most cost-effective, readily deployable, and environmentally safe.

I urge you to convene this panel at your earliest convenience and to provide Congress with a completed report as soon as practicable. I look forward to having further discussions with you about how best to focus and structure this effort.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

cc: Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member