

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Meeting with Thailand's Health Minister to Discuss Making
HIV/AIDS Drugs More Affordable
May 21, 2007**

In conjunction with his meeting with Thailand's Health Minister Mr. Mongkol Na Songkhla, Congressman Henry A. Waxman reiterated that the U.S. should respect the decision of the Thai government to issue compulsory licenses on essential medicines.

“Thailand is an important U.S. ally that is trying to save the lives of its citizens. More than 500,000 people in Thailand are living with HIV/AIDS. And while Thailand's HIV/AIDS treatment initiative has been recognized as among the most successful in the world, the high price of medicine has created a significant obstacle to the expansion and sustainability of the Thai program.

Mr. Mongkol assured me that the Government of Thailand is committed to the principle of balancing the protection of innovation and access to medicines. In this regard, the Government of Thailand is particularly sensitive to intellectual property concerns and maintains that it will only use compulsory licenses in compliance with WTO rules.

Accordingly, the U.S. should show compassion and provide support to our longtime friend rather than impose punitive actions such as the U.S. Trade Representative's recent announcement that Thailand has been put on the agency's 'Priority Watch List.’”