



Bill Summary

CARBON-NEUTRAL GOVERNMENT ACT

Rep. Henry A. Waxman

Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

On June 7, 2007, Rep. Henry A. Waxman introduced H.R. 2635, the Carbon-Neutral Government Act, to promote federal leadership in the fight against global warming by making the federal government's operations carbon-neutral by 2050.

Government-Wide Emissions Targets. The federal government is the single largest energy consumer in the United States, but there is currently no requirement for the federal government to track or directly reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. H.R. 2635 would require federal agencies to inventory their greenhouse gas emissions, freeze emissions in 2010, and reduce net emissions until they reach zero by 2050. The bill directs EPA to set annual government-wide emissions targets to achieve reductions and requires agencies to develop plans to meet these targets and report on their progress. The Carbon-Neutral Government Act also includes a two-year pilot program proposed by Rep. Welch to allow the government to purchase limited emissions offsets.

Emissions Related to Mobility. Nearly two thirds of all energy consumed by the federal government in 2005 was for fuel used for mobility. H.R. 2635 implements two government-wide policies to reduce these emissions. First, the legislation would establish minimum emissions standards for federal fleet vehicles. Specifically, agencies must purchase vehicles that meet the California motor vehicle standards for greenhouse gas emissions when those standards take effect. Second, the bill would require the federal government to consider the full cost of fuel in federal procurement decisions. Another provision ensures that as agencies move to purchase more alternative fuels, those fuels are no worse in terms of emissions than the conventional fuels they are replacing.

Emissions Related to Buildings. Approximately one third of the energy consumed by the federal government in 2005 was associated with the operations of federal facilities. The Carbon-Neutral Government Act requires existing and new federal facilities to take specific actions to reduce their energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions. Specifically, a new federal building designed in 2010 must consume 60% less fossil-fuel generated energy than comparable facilities in 2003, and this target is strengthened by 10% every five years, such that a new federal building designed in 2030 must be energy neutral. This requirement will also cover major renovations and built to lease facilities. In addition, new federal buildings will be required to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification from the US Green Buildings Council. This will assure that buildings are designed and constructed to meet environmental performance standards. The bill also maximizes the efficiency of existing buildings by requiring benchmarks for energy performance and strengthening requirements for the procurement of energy efficient products.