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**Select Committee on
Energy Independence and Global Warming
U.S. House of Representatives**

April 14, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

The Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming is concerned about the barriers that keep renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies from achieving their full potential. Americans are facing record-breaking energy prices while emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases continue to rise around the world. Technologies to harness clean, renewable energy already exist and are rapidly becoming cheaper and more widely available, but their development and deployment remain hindered by a number of barriers.

This week, delegations from around the world convened in Berlin, Germany to discuss the formation of an International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Delegations participating in this first-stage meeting hope to decide the objectives and goals of such an agency as well as its organizational structure and funding.

It appears the Administration did not take advantage of this opportunity. No delegation from the United States participated in this conference. This is a disappointing decision that once again demonstrates that the Administration's energy policies are out of step with America's needs and priorities. Among the nearly 200 officials from over 50 countries gathered to discuss this important issue, there was nobody there to represent the United States in an official capacity. The constructive participation and leadership of a U.S. delegation during this formative dialogue could have proved crucial in shaping a successful and ultimately effective organization.

Earlier this year, I introduced a bill that calls on this Administration to engage the world on renewable energy and seek to establish an International Renewable Energy Agency. This bipartisan bill reflects the view of many in Congress that U.S. leadership is essential to accelerating the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies.

U.S. leadership has twice been the catalyst for collaboration through international energy institutions. In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his "Atoms for Peace"

speech before the U.N. General Assembly, which laid out the vision of the International Atomic Energy Agency: to control and develop the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Two decades later, in the face of the Arab oil embargo and resulting price shocks, Henry Kissinger—in the same Secretary of State role which you now hold—called for the establishment of the International Energy Agency to check the growing power of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). These international agencies continue to play important roles in overseeing, monitoring, and analyzing markets and stakeholders, as well as functioning as valuable storehouses of data, knowledge, and expertise on relevant issues.

Today we are again faced with an energy crisis that is made more urgent by the growing threat of global warming. Since President Bush's first year in office, the average price of oil in the United States has climbed over 500 percent, natural gas over 320 percent, and coal over 50 percent. With population and wealth continuing to grow around the world, little relief from further demand pressure appears to be in sight. Meanwhile, the price of renewable energy is moving in the opposite direction. However, many countries are not prepared to implement comprehensive renewable energy policies and programs because they lack adequate technology and awareness, R&D capabilities, industrial capacity, financing mechanisms, and educated professionals in the field. An International Renewable Energy Agency would help level the playing field for renewable energy. It would also help to establish markets for the low-carbon products and technologies that will drive domestic job creation and economic growth over the coming century.

Our current energy path harms the economy and puts the global environment in peril. President Bush has acknowledged this. On March 5, 2008, President Bush told an audience convened for a renewable energy conference in Washington, D.C. that "America has got to change its habits" when it comes to energy. He also asserted that "America is in the lead when it comes to energy independence; we're in the lead when it comes to new technologies; we're in the lead when it comes to global climate change -- and we'll stay that way." This week's dialogue in Berlin was an opportunity to demonstrate the leadership needed to transform the world's energy path. Instead, the United States was conspicuous by its absence.


Given the array of supportive statements President Bush has made regarding renewable energy, the need to address global warming, and the need to act collaboratively, I would like to know the State Department's rationale for the decisions made this week regarding the Berlin conference as well as your view going forward.

1. Why was no U.S. delegation present to participate in the Preparatory Conference for the International Renewable Energy Agency held April 9-11, 2008, in Berlin, Germany?
2. Does the Administration support establishing an international agency that specifically addresses the development and deployment barriers faced by renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies?

3. Does the State Department plan on sending participatory representatives to future conferences of this nature?

The Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming is seeking prompt answers to these questions. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please respond to the questions above by April 28, 2008. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Jonathan Phillips at 202-225-4012.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
Chairman

cc: Mr. James Sensenbrenner
Ranking Member