

Opening Statement
Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
*Pushing the Efficiency Envelope: R & D for High-Performance Buildings, Industries,
and Consumers*

April 28, 2009

Thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

When it comes to words, I'm convinced that less is more. People who write well can express themselves with few words. Give me thirty minutes to speak and I'll need no preparation. Limit me to two minutes and I'll have to plan carefully what to say.

When we're blessed with much, we can get by with a lot of inefficiencies. Electricity is cheap, so we leave the lights on. Material is cheap, so we build big, when we might get more utility out of small. Gas is cheap, so we've bought guzzlers instead of sippers.

But climate science, oil price hikes, and economic hardships remind us that we need more efficient practices. Today, we're here to specifically talk about how to encourage energy efficiencies in one of our most energy intensive sectors – buildings. While I support the government taking proactive measures to improve building codes and promote R & D programs that result in the deployment of net-zero energy, high-performance buildings, I think the answer lies in economics.

Attaching a price to carbon would be a built-in incentive for construction of more efficient spaces. Industries, seeking to save on costs and appeal to conscious consumers, will revamp wasteful practices. Tenants will seek space that promises a reduction in energy costs due to efficient lighting, heating and cooling appliances, and utilities. We'll also witness improvements outside the walls of these buildings. Demand will rise for efficient products, and jobs will be created in meeting that demand. Reduced fuel consumption will translate to increased national security, and efficient energy production will mean cleaner air.

This is the potential of a revenue-neutral carbon tax. Yes, there's a place to talk about developing positive codes and standards, but the real incentive lies in the market, not in regulation. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.