



For Immediate Release  
Friday, December 19, 2008

Contact: Jessica Lin, Alliance, 202-530-4346  
Jim Owen, EEI, 202-508-5659  
John Anthony, EFC, 202-778-1639  
Michael Oko, NRDC, 202-513-6245

## **Energy, Environmental Groups Urge Quick Action by Congress To Use Energy Efficiency Programs To Stimulate Economy, Create Green Jobs**

**WASHINGTON** – As a new administration transitions into the White House and Congress gears up to move an economic recovery package early next year, energy and environmental groups today issued a set of recommendations to boost the nation's energy efficiency, create green jobs, and save energy and money. The groups urged Congress to incorporate many of the proposals into legislation to be considered in early 2009.

The Alliance to Save Energy, Edison Electric Institute, Energy Future Coalition and the Natural Resources Defense Council released proposals ranging from low-income home weatherization and energy efficiency retrofits for homes and commercial and government buildings, to strengthened national model building energy codes, enhanced product efficiency standards and energy efficiency investments by utilities. In addition to federal funds for job-creating efficiency programs, the groups asked Congress to fund the authorized Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program to help states further reduce their total energy use, reduce emissions related to fossil fuel use, and improve energy efficiency across all sectors.

Significantly, the groups urged Congress to make the program's funding contingent upon state adoption of more stringent building code requirements and major changes to utility regulation that create long-term incentives to encourage major investments in energy efficiency. Without making such long-term changes, the benefits of federal funding under the block grant program likely would not be as sustainable, the organizations said.

"Today, the United States is the largest energy user and is the most energy inefficient economy of all developed countries," noted Alliance to Save Energy President Kateri Callahan, who continued: "An economic recovery bill that includes significant investments in energy efficiency will not only create jobs immediately, but also and more importantly will bring American ingenuity and its "can-do" spirit to a new, clean and sustainable energy future – one in which the U.S. becomes one of the most energy efficient economies in the world."

"With electricity demand projected to grow 30 percent over the next two decades and with utilities facing rising costs across the board, enhanced energy efficiency programs are critical to helping consumers manage their electricity costs," said EEI President Tom Kuhn. "For this to happen, state regulators must go beyond simply removing disincentives to greater efficiency gains by utilities. Instead, they must create regulations that allow utilities to earn a rate of return on new efficiency investments, comparable to what they would earn on a new power plant, for example."

– OVER –

Reid Detchon, executive director of the Energy Future Coalition, commented, "Most utilities make more money by selling more energy than they do by saving it. Flipping that incentive structure is the key to unlocking greater national investment in energy efficiency. Right now, the nation's building trades have been knocked flat on their backs by the economic downturn. Retrofitting America's buildings for energy efficiency can put them back to work immediately and deliver needed energy savings to consumers."

"Any serious approach to moving America toward clean energy and tackling our climate crisis must include energy efficiency as one of the key elements," said Peter Lehner, executive director of NRDC. "Energy efficiency is the fastest and most cost-effective way to decrease global warming pollution. Significant investments to increase energy efficiency in people's homes and businesses will help repower America with clean energy, save consumers millions of dollars, and create new jobs to restart our economy."

President-elect Obama and congressional advocates have indicated a clear desire to take up legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The groups emphasized that energy efficiency should be a key element of any federal response to climate concerns. "Energy efficiency programs offer both immediate and long-term benefits by creating green jobs, helping to mitigate rising energy costs and reducing emissions related to global warming," they said. "We hope Congress will move quickly on these critical issues."

###

*The Alliance to Save Energy is a coalition of prominent business, government, environmental, and consumer leaders who promote the efficient and clean use of energy worldwide to benefit consumers, the environment, economy, and national security.*

*The Edison Electric Institute is the association of U.S. shareholder-owned electric companies. Our members serve 95 percent of the ultimate customers in the shareholder-owned segment of the industry, and represent approximately 70 percent of the U.S. electric power industry. We also have more than 85 International electric companies as Affiliate members, and more than 170 industry suppliers and related organizations as Associate members.*

*The Energy Future Coalition is a nonpartisan public policy initiative that seeks to speed the transition to a new energy economy. Combining expertise and advocacy, the Coalition brings together business, labor, and environmental groups to identify new directions in energy policy with broad political support. The Energy Future Coalition works closely with the United Nations Foundation on energy and climate policy, especially energy efficiency and bioenergy issues. The UN Foundation provides financial and in-kind support to the Coalition.*

*The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.2 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.*