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March 13, 2012

The Honorable Peter Welch  
U.S. House of Representatives  
313 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David McKinley  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1404 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Welch and McKinley:

Thank you for introducing the "Home Owners Managing Energy Savings" or HOMES Act. Included in the Act is a provision clarifying that the bill's authority may not be used to implement a mandatory home energy labeling program. The National Association of REALTORS® strongly supports this provision, as well as voluntary, incentive-based approaches to improving home energy efficiency.

The HOMES Act would offer significant rebates to homeowners for voluntary improvements to the energy efficiency of their property. Many homeowners would like to make these improvements, but simply do not have the resources to undertake the project. This bill would help support these efforts by providing direct incentives, which would not only benefit our environment, but also create jobs and reduce energy bills for consumers. While homeowners would like to take advantage of these incentives, many would be discouraged from doing so if the program requires an energy label as a condition for the incentives. Labeling could stigmatize older properties which would most benefit from the HOMES Act. A disproportionate share of these homes are owned or occupied by populations which live on modest or fixed incomes according to the latest American Housing Study. This provision would prohibit the Energy Department from using authority under the bill to implement a much broader labeling program without interfering with the Rebate program's assessment process.

Thank you for your work on this measure and its clarifying provision. We support a voluntary, incentive-based approach to making homes more energy efficient. The labeling provision significantly improves such an approach in the HOMES program, making its voluntary energy efficiency incentives available to more Americans. We look forward to continuing to work with you as the legislative process continues.

Sincerely,

Maurice "Moe" Veissi  
2012 President, National Association of REALTORS®



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