



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

*The Voice For Real Estate®*

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July 29, 2010

The Honorable James Clyburn  
United States House of Representatives  
2135 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Clyburn:

This week, the House of Representatives is expected to consider H.R. 4785, the Rural Energy Savings Program Act. H.R. 4785 would offer significant incentives to rural property owners for voluntary improvements to building energy efficiency. The bill includes a provision clarifying that the authority to implement the "Rural Star" program could not be used to implement mandatory energy labeling of real estate. The National Association of REALTORS® supports this provision as well as voluntary, incentive-based approaches to energy efficiency.

Many property owners would like to make energy efficiency improvements, but simply do not have the resources to undertake the project. This bill would support these efforts by providing low-interest loans. These efforts would not only benefit our environment, but also create jobs and reduce energy bills for consumers.

We support the Agriculture Committee additions that prohibit the USDA from using the Rural Star program authority to implement a broader energy labeling program without interfering with bill protocols to verify the energy savings. While property owners may like to take advantage of this program, many would be discouraged from doing so if the loans were conditioned on labels. Labeling would stigmatize older properties which could most benefit from Rural Star. A disproportionate share of older properties are owned or occupied by those living on modest or fixed incomes.

Finally, we note the addition of the "Home Star" lending program to the bill. We hope that Congress will continue to work to make sure this program is fully viable and available to qualified consumers.

Realtors® support voluntary, incentive-based approaches to making properties energy efficient. We look forward to continuing to work with you as the legislative process continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki Cox Golder".

Vicki Cox Golder, CRB  
2010 President, National Association of REALTORS®