

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS
JOHN D. DINGELL, MICH., CHAIRMAN

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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PRESS STATEMENT
CONGRESSMAN JOHN D. DINGELL
(D. Mich., 16th District)

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Contact: Patrick McLain

REPRESENTATIVE DINGELL ANNOUNCES
INVESTIGATION OF OMB ROLE IN REGULATORY PROCESS

John D. Dingell (D-Mich), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Energy and Commerce Committee, announced today that his Subcommittee is conducting an investigation of the role of the Office of Management and Budget in influencing the regulatory decisions of agencies and departments within the jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee. The hearings, which Chairman Dingell anticipates conducting, will focus on the impact of President Reagan's Executive Order on Regulatory Relief and the process by which agencies are required to perform regulatory impact analysis which would then be reviewed by the OMB before those rules may enter the rule-making process.

Dingell said, "We have made great strides in recent years to ensure that the regulatory process is an open one which protects the public interest. It is essential that the government's regulatory process reflect the views of all those having input, or who may have an interest in the outcome of regulations. We have made substantial progress in developing procedural protections to ensure against undue and improper influence by regulated industry into that rulemaking process. I will not see those advances swept away by the pen of this or any other President."

Dingell also expressed his concerns about the ability of the affected agencies to perform the required analysis, as well as OMB's capabilities of performing an adequate review.

Dingell stated that "If the goal of this Administration is to stop any regulation which is designed to protect the health and safety of the American people, then that is precisely the result which they will achieve by diverting agency resources to the analysis of any given rule. It already has reduced those resources dangerously."

I also question the capability of a small staff within the Executive Office to perform proper review of those analyses without having to resort to the aid of industry which that rule intends to regulate.

Congressman Albert Gore (D-Tenn), an active member of the Subcommittee in this inquiry, joined Chairman Dingell in initiating this most important investigation and added, "During the last Congress, this Subcommittee demonstrated very dramatically I believe, the shortcomings of cost-benefit analysis when used as a rigid tool in the decision-making process. I am now even more distressed by this Administration's efforts to impose this particularly imprecise tool upon agencies through a process I believe to be replete with opportunities for improper influence to be imposed upon a now open administrative process."

The Subcommittee is now in the process of gathering information from OMB and other individuals and anticipates hearings later this month.