

**Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Funding for the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 113th Congress
Fred Upton, Chairman
March 5, 2013
Statement Submitted for the Record**

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to testify alongside Ranking Member Waxman regarding the Energy and Commerce Committee's budget for 2013. It's a great pleasure to see another Michigander in the chairman's chair.

In this budgetary environment, where we are tightening our belts across the federal government, Congress cannot be an exception. Over the last two years, the Energy and Commerce Committee has absorbed the 5 percent reduction applied for the full 112th Congress allocation and the subsequent 6.4 percent additional reduction for 2012 while working hard to maintain active and effective legislative and oversight functions. I'd like to share briefly how we managed the previous reductions.

Our committee has worked in a bipartisan fashion to reduce expenses without reducing our output. Staff vacancies are left unfilled, positions have been consolidated, and detailees and fellows are used to support our core staff. The number of field hearings and site visits has been reduced, and the cost of those events we do convene outside of Washington, D.C. are held to a minimum. We have reduced subscriptions, cut back on office supplies, and sought low-cost alternative products such as refurbished print cartridges to make every penny count. Let me share one specific example our committee has recently begun to implement.

For the 113th Congress, Ranking Member Waxman agreed to work with me to implement a *paperless hearings policy*. For years, the committee would routinely print hard copies of witness testimony – copies for staff during briefings, copies for members during the hearing, copies for members of the media, copies for the public. Imagine the millions of pages printed over the course of a Congress – pages that often end up in the recycle bin without being read.

We thought it was a simple and sensible cost-saver to simply stop making the excess copies and allow the public, the press, and members of our committee to access testimony online. While making accommodations for individuals with special needs or other unique circumstances that may require paper, I'm pleased that we are well on our way to significantly reducing copier fees while maintaining a high level of transparency and ensuring the public can access our work online.

While these incremental reductions in operating expenses do add up, the bulk of our budget continues to be focused on maintaining the experienced and expert staff that is so essential to our operations. This is especially true going forward. As I mentioned at the outset, we have taken significant actions to reduce our staff expenditures over the last two years, and under the funding scenarios being contemplated, this will continue. For the majority, as of February 1, 2013, our salary costs are 11 percent lower than our actual 2012 costs in this category. While belt tightening is to be expected, I would express a word of caution about the eventual toll on both the majority and the minority as we leave positions unfilled.

My goal, shared by the Ranking Member, is to fulfill the responsibilities of our committee in the most efficient manner possible. While Henry and I may disagree on certain policy matters, we are united in our request to you to provide the resources necessary to ensure our committee can continue to advance legislative solutions, examine new ideas, and conduct rigorous oversight of the issues within our jurisdiction. From energy to health care, the environment to technology, manufacturing to communications networks, we have a big job to do and we need the resources to do it well.

Our budget submission offers a detailed explanation of our proposed committee operating expenses under the 11 percent reduction from the 2012 authorized level and the 5 percent increase over the 2012 actual spending level. As you can see, the second scenario affords us the opportunity to increase the number of field hearings and site visits to gather important information from the people our policies affect, as well as to restore at least some of the staff positions that have been pared back in recent months. In both scenarios, we propose to continue policies we've implemented over the last two years to substantially reduce operational costs in other categories, because we believe that even with additional resources available, we can and must be as efficient as possible in our operations.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify alongside my Ranking Member, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.