



STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ARTS

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Senator Doug Cameron
Chair
Senate Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

4 July 2012

Dear Senator Cameron

Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards Bill 2012
Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards (Registration Fees) Bill 2012

I write with regard to the above bills, introduced in the House of Representatives on 30 May 2012. As you are aware, the legislation was referred for review to the House Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts on 31 May, and to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee on 21 June 2012. At a recent meeting, the House committee considered options for the conduct of this review, and I am writing to you on behalf of members, to express their unanimous view.

You may be aware that since the beginning of the 43rd Parliament, the number of bills referred to House Committees for review has increased significantly. Approximately 150 bills, in approximately 80 packages, have been referred to House Committees, and Joint Committees administered by the House. This Committee has noted on several earlier occasions that while the opportunity to review legislation is a welcome and valuable mechanism, inquiries should also seek to ensure that resources of the Parliament are appropriately used. On several occasions, bills have been referred to equivalent or similar Committees in the House and the Senate for what is effectively a concurrent inquiry. It has been noted at various times, including in statements to the House, that this process does not necessarily represent the most effective or efficient means by which legislation can be reviewed; submissions and hearings can be unintentionally duplicated, for little additional benefit. Dual inquiries can also result in confusion for stakeholders and members of the community who may have an interest in participating in an inquiry, and who are uncertain about the role of the respective Houses when two inquiries are being conducted simultaneously.

The Committee notes that (according to your Committee's website) submissions have been invited to the Senate inquiry, to be received by 12 July 2012, and that the scheduled reporting date for your Committee is 15 August 2012.

Given the significant and important legislation before the House, and the current inquiry of the Senate Committee, the House Committee today resolved that it not proceed to advertise for submissions at this stage, and awaits with interest the outcome of the Senate inquiry. The Committee will pay particular attention to any observations made by Senators regarding the concern noted by the House Selection Committee in the recommendation of its 31 May report: 'that the scheme may increase costs and green tape for those involved.' At the conclusion of the inquiry currently being conducted by the Senate Committee, therefore, the House Committee may seek to take further action. I will advise of any future developments in this area.

Further to the resolution of the House Committee at its recent meeting, this letter has been authorised for publication on the Committee's website, and will be available via

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=ccea/index.htm

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Zappia', with a large, stylized initial 'Z' that loops around the start of the name.

Tony Zappia MP
Chair