

September 16, 2010

CLYBURN STATEMENT ON 'RURAL STAR' ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM

WASHINGTON – House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (D-SC) today delivered remarks on the House floor on HR 4785, The Rural Energy Savings Program Act, legislation that provides loans to American families, small businesses and farmers in rural communities to renovate their homes, farms or businesses to become more energy-efficient. These programs will offer loans of about \$3,000 to \$7,500 to eliminate the upfront cost of home energy upgrades, which customers will then repay over 10 years on their electric bill. The energy savings from the renovations will cover most of the cost of the loan. The Rural Star and Loan Star programs in this bill will boost demand for energy efficient products, materials, and construction and installation services that are made in America—over 90 percent of these products and materials—caulking, insulation, HVAC systems, hot water heaters, sealant, windows, doors other structural materials—are made in America. Following are Clyburn’s remarks on the House floor:

“Mr. Speaker, the Rural Energy Savings Program, or ‘Rural Star,’ as it is popularly called, is an important piece of the ‘Make it in America’ agenda. It is a program that will create jobs, and help save families money on their energy bills.

“Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once called our 50 states ‘laboratories of democracy,’ and that is certainly the case with this home-grown, American-owned idea. The rural electric co-ops in South Carolina brought this idea to my attention late last year. And I worked with them and Congressman John Spratt to craft legislation that takes the South Carolina model nationwide. I am very proud that South Carolina is providing significant leadership for our economic recovery with this innovative approach to job creation and energy savings.

“The concept is very simple: low-cost home improvement loans for energy efficiency upgrades—sealing, insulation, HVAC systems, heat pumps and other structural improvements. Those low cost loans are paid back on customers’ electricity bills, with the energy savings covering the cost of the loan. And when the term of the loan expires, most people will be saving hundreds of dollars annually on their monthly utility bills.

“This bipartisan, bicameral legislation is first and foremost a jobs bill, and it is based on common-sense ideas that can be done in a fiscally responsible manner that will protect taxpayers and the Treasury. Let me emphasize that this is a voluntary loan program, not a grant or rebate, and the loans are paid back to the federal treasury.

“We call this the Rural Energy Savings Program, because it will save consumers energy and money. More importantly, it will put people back to work, particularly in the building and construction trades, and manufacturing industries – sectors that have been hit the hardest by the economic downturn.

“While providing home energy upgrades and significant employment opportunities for building and construction workers, this legislation will boost domestic manufacturing. Retailers of energy efficient building materials and appliances will also benefit from increased sales. Virtually all of the energy efficient products and materials used for energy efficiency improvements are made in America.

“Rural Star has the support of a broad coalition of stakeholders, including the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Association of Homebuilders, the Retail Industry Leaders Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association.

“Rural Star will create high-skill, high-wage manufacturing and construction jobs and deliver meaningful energy savings for consumers that will put money directly into their wallets. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

“Let’s create jobs that are made in America so that our fellow citizens can, ‘Make it in America.’”