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NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. at a Fairfax County Parkway Connector site. In his remarks, he referred to James W. Owens, chairman and chief executive officer, Caterpillar, Inc.

Statement on Representative John D. Dingell, Jr.'s Years of Federal Service
February 11, 2009

It gives me great pleasure to commend Chairman John Dingell, the dean of the U.S. House of Representatives, who today becomes the longest serving Member in the history of the House. Since 1955, Chairman Dingell has represented the people of Michigan's 15th District with distinction.

Over the past 53 years, Chairman Dingell has been a champion for the health and well-being of hard-working Americans. Following in the footsteps of his father, the Honorable John Dingell, Sr., Chairman Dingell has introduced legislation to provide national health insurance for all Americans in each and every Congress. Seniors throughout America have Chairman Dingell to thank for his instrumental role in passage of the 1965 Medicare Act and for his innumerable efforts since then.

Through his hard work, Chairman Dingell reminds us that we have a solemn duty to protect our natural heritage for future generations. As a young Congressman, Chairman Dingell authored one of the first bills to protect America's wetlands and played a key role in the 1964 National Wilderness Act. Since then, he's sponsored legislation to improve water quality, protect endangered species, expand sources of renewable energy, and clean up toxic waste.

Chairman Dingell has long strived to ensure that every tax dollar is used wisely, and that we have a more open, honest, and accessible Government. In particular, his investigations into waste, fraud, and abuse have protected American consumers from inferior Government contracting, deceptive drug marketing, and insider trading.

On behalf of the American people, let me say, "Thank you, Chairman Dingell, for your decades of distinguished service on behalf of 15th District." As dean of the U.S. House, you are a model of tireless commitment for all of your colleagues. I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come as we endeavor to protect and improve the well-being of all Americans.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Economic Stabilization Legislation
February 11, 2009

I want to thank the Democrats and Republicans in Congress who came together around a hard-fought compromise that will save or create more than 3.5 million jobs and get our economy back on track. Just today, the CEO of Caterpillar said that if this American recovery and reinvestment plan is passed, his company would be able to rehire some of the employees they've been forced to lay off. It's also a plan that will provide immediate tax relief to families and businesses, while investing in priorities like health care, education, energy, and infrastructure that will grow our economy once more. I'm grateful to the House Democrats for starting this process, and for Members in the House and Senate for moving it along with the urgency that this moment demands.

NOTE: The statement referred to James W. Owens, chairman and chief executive officer, Caterpillar, Inc.