

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2007

Contact: Lorraine Waddill, Legislative Assistant 698-7810

Senator John Watkins Working to Advance Energy Conservation

-- Legislative package includes awareness effort, tax exemption --

In an effort to encourage Virginians to conserve energy – especially when making new appliance purchases – the Energy Efficiency Coalition along with Senator John C. Watkins (R-Powhatan) and Delegate John A. Cosgrove (R-Chesapeake) have developed a legislative package to raise awareness and save consumers money when they make energy-efficient purchases.

Senator Watkins' legislation is currently under consideration in the Senate. His resolution, SJ 394, would designate the first week in October, beginning in 2007, as "Energy Conservation Awareness Week." The other component of the package would provide a sales tax exemption for purchases of certain ENERGY STAR qualified products with sales prices under \$2,500. This bill, SB867, would allow purchases made during a four-day period in mid-October to fall under the exemption.

"The time is right for this effort," said Watkins. "With the national focus on energy conservation, it's our duty to do whatever we can to encourage people to make good choices and learn how to be wise consumers of energy. And by offering a sales tax exemption, my constituents as well as folks all across Virginia can save money too. It's really a win-win."

Merchandise that qualifies for the ENERGY STAR label must meet strict energy efficient guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Studies have shown that consumers who make energy efficient choices in purchasing their appliances can save up to 30% on their utility bills.

###