

<http://reason.com/blog/2011/01/05/no-one-ever-accused-waxman-of>

## "No one ever accused Waxman of having a light touch"

Damon W. Root | January 5, 2011

The Cato Institute's Walter Olson celebrates the changing of the guard at the House Energy and Commerce Committee:

While others wish the new Congress well today on its swearing-in, I plan to light a 100-watt incandescent bulb and hoist a caffeinated alcoholic beverage in honor of a different milestone: starting today, the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee will no longer be under the control of Henry Waxman (D-Calif.).

Some lawmakers can talk a decent game about lean 'n' smart regulation, but no one ever accused Waxman of having a light touch. (The 900-page Waxman-Markey environmental bill, mercifully killed by the Senate, included provisions letting Washington rewrite local building codes.) He's known for aggressive micromanagement even of agencies run by putative allies: his staff has repeatedly twisted the ears of Obamanaut appointees to complain that their approach to regulation is too moderate and gradual. More than any other lawmaker on the Hill, he's stood in the way of any meaningful reform of the 2008 CPSIA law, which piles impractical burdens on small makers of children's products, thrift stores, bicycles and others.