

NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

For immediate release: April 11, 2008

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Dingell, Stupak Question U.S. Olympic Committee on Planned Exclusion of Women's Ski Jumping from 2010 Olympics

Washington, D.C. – Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, sent the following letter to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) regarding the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decision to exclude women's ski jumping from the 2010 Olympic Games which will be held in Vancouver, Canada.

The two lawmakers expressed concern that the IOC did not apply uniform standards in its decision to exclude the event based on too few participants and too few nations. Dingell and Stupak pointed to Olympic events with even fewer participants, such as women's bobsled, luge and skeleton.

The text of the letter follows:

April 11, 2008

Mr. James Scherr

CEO

United States Olympic Committee

1 Olympic Plaza

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Dear Mr. Scherr:

Under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations have oversight jurisdiction over the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). The purpose of this letter is to express our concern about the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) recent refusal to overturn its 2006 decision to exclude women's ski jumping as an event at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, Canada. We are interested to learn whether you plan to do anything regarding this action.

Many believe that the IOC based its initial 2006 decision to exclude women's ski jumping on technical grounds, stating that too few women and nations compete in the sport. While we understand that the IOC must follow the conditions for inclusion of events in the Olympic program set forth in its Olympic Charter, we are concerned that such conditions are not being applied uniformly with respect to all sporting events.

Specifically, we question why women's ski jumping—a sport in which 83 women, representing 14 countries, competed in worldwide competition on three continents during the 2006/2007 season—is excluded from the Olympic Games when sports with far fewer competitors, such as women's bobsled, luge, and skeleton, have already been adopted as Olympic events. More importantly, it is our understanding that, as a result of changes adopted by the IOC in July 2007, the Olympic Charter neither specifies the number of competitors required for a sport to be included in the Games nor requires two world championships prior to the Olympic games.

Accordingly, to assist the Committee in its oversight of this matter, we request that the USOC review the IOC's decision to exclude women's ski jumping from the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and brief Committee staff within three weeks of the date of this letter concerning what, if any, action you propose to overturn the IOC's discriminatory decision. In preparation for that briefing, please provide written answers to the following questions as well as all material requested within two weeks of the date of this letter:

1. What is the USOC's position regarding the IOC's November 2006 decision to exclude women's ski jumping from the 2010 Olympic Winter Games? Please include in your explanation the basis for USOC's position citing rules or by-laws within the Olympic Charter to justify your decision. Please provide all communications with the IOC concerning this matter, as well as all communications received from competitors or public or private organizations concerning this issue.
2. Does the USOC agree with the IOC's refusal to overturn its November 2006 decision to exclude women's ski jumping from the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, despite the 2007 rule changes in the Olympic Charter? If so, what is the basis of your decision, and who has made that decision at the USOC?

3. Is the USOC aware of examples when the IOC has made exceptions to its own rules when adopting a sport to the Olympic Games? If so, please provide this information.

4. Is the USOC aware that currently the U.S. Ski Jumping team is composed entirely of women, and that the U.S. women would be in medal contention if women's ski jumping is included in the 2010 Olympic Winter Games? Please provide all communications with the U.S. Ski Jumping team and its members in regards to this issue.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John D. Dingell
Chairman

Bart Stupak
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable John Shimkus, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations