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(Washington, D.C.) Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers returned to Washington, D.C. today to start the 2008 legislative session. She will focus on issues important to Eastern Washington, ranging from health care to energy.

“I continue to hear about the need to reduce energy costs. Whether you buy diesel for your tractor, or buy a lot of electricity for your manufacturing plant, the high cost of energy hurts Eastern Washington,” McMorris Rodgers said. “We need to find ways to encourage innovation and efficiency and work to increase the access to fuel sources already available.” During her time home, McMorris Rodgers toured Avista Utilities’ generating plant in Kettle Falls which turns wood waste into electricity in an environmentally friendly manner. “We shouldn’t forget the fuel sources of today as we encourage development of fuel sources for tomorrow,” McMorris Rodgers said. In 2007, McMorris Rodgers supported recognizing hydropower as a renewable resource, and will continue those efforts this year.

McMorris Rodgers will also continue her bipartisan work to improve access to quality, affordable health care in Eastern Washington. During 2007, she helped restore funding for rural health care, worked to further the education of future medical professionals and advocated using technology to help streamline the red tape involved in health care. “We use 21<sup>st</sup> century medical technology in operating rooms and clinics. There’s no reason we can’t use the same technology to cut down on the paperwork and recordkeeping that bogs down our health care system,” McMorris Rodgers said.

McMorris Rodgers looks forward to tackling these and other issues during the upcoming year. “I look forward to supporting a farm bill that benefits Eastern Washington farmers and rural communities – not one that adds billions of dollars in taxes,” McMorris Rodgers said. McMorris Rodgers also looks forward to working across party lines to balance the budget and expand the role of Fairchild Air Force Base to help keep our nation and communities safe.

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