Whirlpool Corporation Supports Governor Taft's Tax Reform Initiative

BENTON HARBOR, Mich., March 9 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Whirlpool Corporation (NYSE: WHR) today announced that it supports Gov. Bob Taft's tax reform plan that aims to remove revenue provisions that discourage manufacturers from making productivity enhancing capital investments in Ohio.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20040202/DETU004LOGO)

Gov. Taft's reform initiative, now before the State Senate and House tax- writing committees, would phase out the personal property tax and the franchise tax, both of which discourage manufacturers from making investments in Ohio and put the state at a competitive disadvantage in attracting and keeping manufacturing jobs. To make up for the revenue lost from these phase outs, Whirlpool supports increases in the Commercial Activity Tax or the Gross Receipts Tax and the kilowatt-hour tax as more equitable tax measures that don't overly burden manufacturers.

These and other changes will help address the downward trend in U.S. manufacturing competitiveness, which was cited in a 2002 report by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). Among the recommendations made by NAM to improve American manufacturing competitiveness is the adjustment of tax measures nationally that give foreign competitors an advantage over domestic manufacturers.

Whirlpool is Ohio's eighth largest manufacturing employer with about 8,900 employees in the state. If the company's Ohio-based suppliers are included, Whirlpool would be the fifth largest manufacturing employer, impacting the livelihood of nearly 16,000 Ohioans. The company's roots in the state date back to the 1920s, and Whirlpool today maintains the world's largest clothes washer plant in Clyde, the world's largest clothes dryer plant in Marion, the world's largest dishwasher plant in Findlay and the home of the iconic KitchenAid stand mixer in Greenville. Whirlpool's facilities in Ohio cover more than 3.8 million square feet and produce over 12 million appliances annually.

"The phase out of these two taxes would eliminate a costly administrative burden on manufacturers, better position Ohio to compete for investments and jobs, and help reduce the size of the state government," said J.B. Hoyt, Whirlpool's director of government relations. "Gov. Taft's initiative provides a fair, realistic approach to bring about meaningful tax reform in the state. And Whirlpool urges the State Senate and House to move forward promptly to enact this tax package."

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances, with annual sales of over $13 billion, 68,000 employees, and nearly 50 manufacturing and technology research centers around the globe. The company markets *Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Brastemp, Bauknecht, Consul* and other major brand names to consumers in more than 170 countries. Additional information about the company can be found on the Internet at http://www.whirlpoolcorp.com.