



News from U.S. Rep. Tom Allen (D-ME)

Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

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America Needs an Energy Policy That Increases Our National Security, Encourages New Technologies, and Enhances Economic Growth

Washington, D.C.—U.S. Representative Tom Allen (D-ME) today issued the following statement at the opening of Energy & Commerce Committee mark-up of the Energy Policy Act of 2003:

“America needs an energy policy that increases our national security, encourages new technologies, and enhances economic growth.

“Over the past ten years, American oil imports rose 40 percent. Our nation now spends nearly \$200,000 per minute overseas to buy oil, mostly from undemocratic regimes. Yet this bill does not redirect American energy policy. The bill before us rewards private industry at the expense of public interest and national security concerns.

“This proposed energy bill is designed to perpetuate the status quo of a fossil fuel driven energy system. It gives a \$1.8 billion subsidy to the coal industry, invests \$399 million in nuclear fuel reprocessing, offers electric transmission companies profitable “incentives” to build transmission lines they are already building, and rewards oil companies for exploiting our public lands. The bill ignores two facts: our nation must reduce the growth of oil consumption and increase our use of renewable energy resources. British Petroleum CEO Lord Browne recently said, ‘We need to get the market to tell the ecological truth’ about our energy system.

“The bill does not redirect energy policy because some businesses claim that they cannot compete in a cleaner, more efficient economy. In fact, the coal and oil industries have successfully convinced my colleagues that they cannot compete in this economy without massive taxpayer subsidies, well into the billions of dollars. I believe America’s energy policy should actively promote policies that will allow

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American industry to catch up to other nations' advancing energy sectors.
American companies trail:

- < behind Iceland in hydrogen and geothermal development,
- < behind Denmark in wind energy,
- < behind Japan in efficient vehicle development,
- < behind Germany in diesel powered engine efficiency, and
- < behind Japan in home heating efficiency.

“These are high growth industries. Wind energy is the fastest growing power segment in the world. America has the high tech work force, the research institutions, and the capital to lead in each of these industries. If we commit to supporting new technologies, our companies will again lead the world in the energy industry.

“This bill’s Hydroelectricity title ignores the compromise written by this committee last year and supported by all interested parties. The title in this bill diminishes the role of everyone but dam owners and FERC in the dam relicensing process. Fishermen, river residents, Native Americans, and even the Fish and Wildlife Service are hindered procedurally in order to protect dam owners who are in breach of the Federal Power Act. Voting to uphold this title is a vote against fishermen, endangered species, Native Americans, and public input, while voting for Mr. Dingell’s substitute is a vote for the supremacy of public interest over industry influence.

“Furthermore, the Hydro title includes a \$300 million subsidy to the well established hydro industry. I intend to offer an amendment to strike this subsidy from the bill, because this committee has no record confirming that this subsidy is a good investment of taxpayer’s money.

“During this markup, I ask my colleagues to change this bill in the public interest. Support Mr. Markey’s CAFÉ amendment that will reduce oil consumption and support Mr. Pallone’s Renewable Portfolio Standard amendment to increase the

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use of renewable energy. Support Mr. Dingell's electricity title that punishes bad actors in the energy industry and protects consumers from the abusive practices so clearly demonstrated in California. And finally, support Mr. Dingell and my amendments that will keep our rivers under the ownership of the American people, instead of giving them to private companies for private gain."

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