

TWO MINUTE STATEMENT ON ENERGY FOR NIKI

Conservation and the development of renewable energy sources must be the keystones of national and regional energy policies. It is clear that the nation's current reliance on foreign oil is unacceptable. It threatens the stability of our economy, fuels inflation and represents a risk to national security. I therefore favor the expansion of domestic energy supplies including production of oil off the Atlantic Coast, but only if adequate environmental safeguards are enforced. I am opposed to the complete deregulation of natural gas because of the devastating effect it would have on consumers in the Northeast. I am also concerned about the severe social and environmental impacts which would result from massive increases in coal burning.

Coupled with the use of conventional sources, conservation and solar energy can help meet our near-term needs and help decrease our reliance on imported energy. Government policies must encourage and promote the use of energy conservation measures in homes and industry. Every available option must be pursued to commercialize renewable energy sources so that they can eventually assume the central supply role. These should include continued emphasis on research and development of new technology, as well as demonstrations of existing technology. Incentives such as tax credits, loans and loan guarantees should be utilized to encourage commercialization. A good example of such an incentive is the Tsongas amendment, which provided funding for the government purchase of solar cells for its own use, thereby stimulating increased production and lower costs. It has already brought closer the day when solar electricity will be cost-effective for all Americans.

Further initiatives, such as expanding foreign markets for solar technologies, will require new leadership in the U.S. Senate. As a member of the Select Ad-Hoc Energy Committee and Co-Chairman of the New England Congressional Caucus - Energy Task Force, I have helped to lead the fight for a comprehensive national energy policy. As your Senator, I plan to continue to lead the efforts to resolve this national challenge.