

NEWS



from
**Paul
Tsongas**

U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

TSONGAS PRIME COSPONSOR OF MAJOR ENERGY PACKAGES

Two major energy packages introduced last week in the Senate have received strong endorsement from Senator Paul Tsongas. The Massachusetts Senator has also joined the Energy Task Force of the Northeast-Midwest Coalition. The coalition is a bipartisan group of Senators from 18 states who work together on economic, energy, trade, and other issues of regional and national import.

Tsongas, a member of the Senate Energy Committee, joined with committee chairman Senator Henry Jackson in cosponsoring an omnibus energy bill outlining a national program to accelerate the development of domestic energy supplies. In addition, Tsongas cosponsored a package of five energy conservation bills sponsored by Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio. A third bill introduced by Senator Dennis Deconcini of Arizona received Tsongas' endorsement and would establish in the Department of Justice a special investigator to probe petroleum shortages.

Tsongas stated, "a bipartisan effort of this magnitude was not possible a year ago. Today, the crisis is too great for the Senate to sit by and fix the blame on others."

"Crude oil, which sold for \$1.70 a barrel in 1973 is now selling for \$21 a barrel. On the spot market, oil has risen to over \$40 a barrel. The only way to alleviate the tight oil market is to ease our demand and expedite development of both renewable and conventional energy sources."

The Jackson bill provides for an expedited decision-making process by establishing a strategy for identifying and advancing non-nuclear energy projects. Secondly, it gives necessary emergency authority to manage short-term shortages as well as providing incentives to develop and exploit synthetic fuels. The Jackson bill contains an omnibus Solar Energy Commercialization section that is designed to advance solar, wind, urban waste, and other renewable energy systems. It also includes a mandatory gasahol program and a federal wind utilization program which would exceletrate the commercialization of wind machines.

The five-bill Metzenbaum package of mandatory conservation measures includes 1) a furnace retrofit program which would require retrofitting of home heating units with approved energy saving devices 2) an energy audit program which would require that homeowners take advantage of the audit programs which utilities are required by law to offer, and that they offer those results to prospective buyers 3) minimum milege standards which would prohibit the sale of cars which fail to achieve minimum fuel efficiency standards 4) enforcement of the 55 MPH speed limit and 5) industrial equipment energy standards. During the last Congress, Tsongas attempted to inact a minimum milege bill and the proposed home energy audits. However, the mood of Congress on energy conservation issues at that time was such that he did not receive adequate support.

The Deconcini bill would designate a special investigator in the Department of Justice to investigate allegations surrounding the petroleum fuel shortage. If criminal conduct or possible violations of federal law are uncovered, the investigator would refer the case to the Attorney General for prosecution.

As a member of the Energy Task Force of the Northeast-Midwest Coalition, Tsongas will work on energy issues with Senators of other states that have been hard hit by the oil crisis.

Tsongas stated, "The common interest of this large regional area is clear. We both face shortages of middle distillates. The Midwest is already experiencing shortages of diesel fuels for agricultural purposes while the Northeast is suffering from inadequate stocks of heating oil for next winter. My membership on the energy task force will enable me to work in tandem with other regions to develop workable solutions to mutual energy-related problems.