

N.E. CONGRESS ON ENERGY ALTERNATIVE
IMPLEMENTATION

Active Programs. - Congress holds an going process
whereas Conference.

New England Energy Policy Conference

Prospects and Options for Regional Energy and Economic Development

The problem of adequate energy supplies at reasonable prices confronts the United States as it heads into the 1980's, but nowhere is the problem more evident than in New England. The region imports between 8 to 9 million barrels of oil per day, or more than 60% of its total energy supplies. This makes New England one of the most vulnerable sections of the country to the actions and whims of the oil exporting nations of the world. In addition, the region pays energy prices which are 30% higher than the national average, 45% higher for electricity. Clearly, whether New Englanders realize it or not, they face an energy crisis of staggering proportions. Indeed, if another Arab Oil Embargo were declared at this time, the region's economy would face almost certain short-term paralysis and great personal hardship would be forced upon its people.

In order to focus in on the energy problems of New England and identify potential solutions, a major New England Energy Policy Conference has been proposed for 1978. Sponsored by the New England Congressional Caucus in conjunction with a N.E. university, the Conference will feature the participation of the region's leading energy experts.

Date and Location

The Conference will take place in Boston, Massachusetts in early December, 1978. A major university will be selected in the

very near future as the site of the event.

Goals and Objectives

The Conference will have a number of different, though related objectives. First and foremost, it is hoped that a consensus will emerge on a New England Energy Policy. Policy papers will be completed in five or six energy areas, reporting the findings of specially selected "blue ribbon" energy panels and their recommendations for a N.E. energy plan. Second, the Conference will bring together on a continuing basis regional energy experts, the private and public sectors, the N.E. Congressional Delegation and state and local government officials, public interest groups, and other interested parties. Third, the Conference should focus attention on the energy difficulties faced by the N.E. region. This informational goal is important, as without widespread recognition of the problem, meaningful solutions will be difficult to implement.

Conference Format and Working Plan

The basic concept of the Energy Policy Conference is that the topic of energy will be divided into five or six major areas which will then be addressed in each case by carefully selected and balanced panels. The panels will begin work approximately eight months prior to the actual Conference, producing a findings and recommendations policy paper in their area two months before the actual event is convened. The policy papers will then be distributed to interested parties and groups.

In order to insure that N.E. energy policy will be formulated with the benefit of national considerations in mind, the panel will seek brief issue papers prepared by national experts. Requests to such recognized authorities will be made in early 1978, with the issues papers being delivered to the panels by the summer.

The December Conference itself will be a two or three day event at which the panels will concurrently report their findings and conclusions (and additional or dissenting views where significant disagreement has occurred within the panels) as presented in the distributed policy papers. Following the panels' presentations, written rebuttal or comment papers will be given by knowledgeable groups and individuals and discussed in an open forum format. And finally, the general public will be asked to participate in making its views known to the energy panels.

After the Conference proceeding is completed, the panels will reconvene so as to consider the views and comments received. Work will be completed on the policy papers for submission to the New England Congressional Caucus in January, 1979.

For summary purposes, the timetable for the Conference will be as follows:

March, 1978 -- Requests will be made to national energy experts for preparation of concise energy issues papers for consideration by panels.

April -- Selection of panels to be made and finalized, and panels to meet for the first time.

June -- National energy issues papers to be presented to panels.

Policy should take into account interests of other parts of the country. So that TEXAS etc. can't say your recommendations are not to their.

NE - response to energy must be coordinated w/ a national policy - not in a vacuum.

July 30th -- Preliminary draft of panels' policy papers due.

October 1st -- Final draft of panels' policy papers completed and submitted for distribution to interested parties.

December 1-2 (tentative) -- Conference. Presentation of panels' findings and recommendations, rebuttal and comment papers given, and public participation in open forum. Introductory session, a keynote speaker, receptions, and closing session will also be included.

January 15th -- Final submission of panel policy papers to New England Congressional Caucus, including input received from Conference.

Concluding Note

This description of the New England Energy Policy Conference is a preliminary one, providing only a basic overview of the Conference as it is now emerging. Necessarily, many important items have been omitted. Questions concerning the Conference may be directed to Rob Pratt at the New England Congressional Caucus.