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STATEMENT OF CONG. PAUL E. TSONGAS (D-MASS)
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The New England Energy Congress is designed to create an energy action blueprint for our region. What makes the Congress so exciting and so important is that it gives the people who can actually make an energy action program work -- the public and private sector decision-makers -- a forum to come together and focus on New England's unique energy problems. Through this dynamic process, they can come up with solutions that can be applied in practical terms right now.

We will be seeking applications from individuals who might wish to serve as delegates, representing every constituency in New England including public interest groups, the private sector, labor, universities and government. The six committees, for which delegates will be selected, will focus on such issues as New England's energy supply situation, its energy needs and demands, energy conservation, regulatory and institutional problems, alternative energy sources, and energy financing.

Each committee will be carefully balanced. Delegates will be chosen by a nomination and selection committee which also reflects widespread representation. The delegates will be selected in May, and will complete their findings and recommendations by early December, when the findings will be presented at the Energy Congress Convention at Tufts University.

Those of us who have supported a national energy plan and have spoken out for its urgent adoption know that we have to take action now

if we are going to have a significant impact on the energy crisis in this century. I believe that now is the time to consider where we are going; to begin developing substitute energy resources; to implement a vigorous program of energy conservation. Now is the time to decide what we value, what quality of life we esteem. For if we wait until the last minute -- which is disturbingly imminent -- none of these are possible and our personal ideals as well as our social and natural environment may well be sacrificed.

I have thought recently that, perhaps, it is not limited supplies but the human being's impact on our fragile environment which is the underlying energy crisis. Even if we were to discover all the oil and gas we desired, and even if we could cleanse coal of its soot and sulfur, energy conservation may prove, not a first resort, but our only one -- in the long haul.

Such thoughts lead naturally to why we are here today. Without a dialogue of citizens on these crucial questions, no energy program or plan can meet our needs and reflect our best interests. The advantage for us in New England is that we can adopt a regional plan which will not only meet local needs, it will also provide the system through which we can affect New England's energy economy directly. We have no choice but to do it now. As New England gets moving, I am convinced the rest of the country will follow our lead.