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FIFTH DISTRICT REPORT
CONGRESSMAN PAUL TSONGAS:

"CONCENTRATING ON ENERGY AND THE ECONOMY"

There is talk in the Congress that the next monument in Washington ought to be built in recognition of the person who shoulders and solves our energy and economic problems. There is no clear choice of an architect for either project.

During the past ten months my staff and I have concentrated on Fifth District energy and economic priorities. Being a member of both the Interior Committee and Banking, Currency and Housing Committee has enabled me to develop expertise in these areas of critical importance.

The Interior Committee's Energy and Environment Subcommittee has conducted extensive hearings on the safety and future development of nuclear energy. This winter, Subcommittee Chairman Morris Udall and I will preside over energy hearings in Massachusetts. In addition two of my colleagues on the subcommittee worked with me to successfully authorize the transfer of \$51.8 million for solar energy development. Concerned over New England's failure to compete for billions of available energy dollars, Senator Kennedy and I proposed the formation of a regional task force to address these needs. We have suggested that the first priority be an effort to attract the national Solar Energy Research Institute to New England. Issues of off-shore drilling, the Alaskan Pipeline, coal and minerals are also under the jurisdiction of the Interior Committee.

After being closely involved with energy issues in the Congress, I am convinced that we must immediately make the tough decisions that to date, have been avoided.

The problems of inflation and the recession are presently the main concerns of the Banking, Currency, and Housing Committee's Economic Stabilization Subcommittee. The increasingly important world trade and finance issues are handled by the International Trade and International Development Institutions Subcommittees. Few Congressmen or Administration officials have even a working knowledge of these subjects. But the effects of OPEC policies and the two Russian Wheat Deals make it clear that the patterns of inflation and recession are closely related to international trade policies. As the second ranking member on the International Development Institutions Subcommittee, I am in a position to establish a real expertise in this area. Furthermore, the future points to world economic interdependence. Neither the United States, nor any other country, can afford a policy of economic isolation.

No area of the country is more aware of energy and economic problems than is the Fifth District. Our cost of living is high. Energy expenses are 35% above the average for the rest of the nation. Our local and state taxes are back-breaking. Businesses have trouble remaining competitive. The unemployment rate hovers around 15%. The Route 128 area probably has more unemployed technicians than MIT has alumni.

Yet we have the resources to trigger our own renaissance. Our older cities have recognized that their historic past is the key to their futures. In Lowell and Lawrence there is an awesome economic potential. The theme of historic preservation enhances property value and attracts capital. At the same time, we should be tapping the scientific and technical renown that the Route 128 area has to offer in order to help solve New England and the nation's energy problems.

I intend to work through my Committees, in the Congress, and within the Fifth District to help realize the potential that exists. However, the economic health of 24 communities and 476,000 people is not the domain of a single Congressman. It is a collective shoulder and a commonly accepted solution that will move us towards the answers we need to find for the Fifth District and for the nation.