

**NEWS** from:

**COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS**

**Morris K. Udall, Chairman**

**U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515**

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UDALL ANNOUNCES HEARING ON SEABROOK REGULATORY PROCESS

Calling the nuclear regulatory process at the Seabrook, N.H. reactor site "a perfect example of how not to conduct a licensing proceeding," House Interior Committee Chairman Morris K. Udall said today the committee's Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment will conduct a hearing on the matter Aug. 7.

The hearing, to be chaired by Rep. Paul E. Tsongas, D-Mass., will begin at 9:45 a.m. in Room 1324 of the Longworth House office Building in Washington.

Udall, who also chairs the subcommittee, said witnesses will include representatives from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the states of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, the Public Service Company of New Hampshire as well as labor and citizens' groups.

"Our basic purpose is to find out what has gone wrong with the licensing process at the Seabrook plant to determine whether legislation is necessary to forestall a repeat of this unfortunate situation," Udall said.

"I am particularly concerned that the Seabrook matter has been widely viewed as one of bureaucratic quibbling over trivia when it is much more than that. While there is no doubt the process has been inexcusably inefficient, there are real safety and environmental issues that must be addressed.

"We are talking about two very large reactors which, if not properly designed and operated, could pose a major threat to the local environment and to the health and safety of the citizens of New England. I am concerned that these real problems be addressed in a thorough and efficient manner by the regulatory process," Udall added. "It is the regulatory process itself, not the problems of safety and environment, that will be the focus of the subcommittee's concern."

Tsongas said Congress established the NRC to assure that nuclear power plants be safely operated.

"If the NRC or other agencies are not fulfilling their responsibilities, then we want to know about it," Tsongas said.