

Statement by U.S. Rep. Paul Tsongas on
Federal Energy Administration activities

April 23, 1975

"Early this year I became aware of a serious lack of consumer representation within the Federal Energy Administration. Actions taken by the FEA in the course of policy and enforcement activities to often were on the side of oil companies, rather than consumers. This matter involves billions of dollars in higher fuel costs. Therefore, an investigation was initiated by my office to accumulate as much information as possible with regard to FEA activities.

"During the course of this investigation it was discovered that retail gasoline station owners were being pressured to stay open longer hours in order to sell additional gasoline. Although the FEA had the authority to order a halt to this pressure, no such action was taken. A letter ~~to the President~~ asking that oil companies ^{cease their pressure} ~~be cautioned~~ against ^{to the Pres.} pressuring retailers was sent. 43 Members of Congress co-signed this letter. I am still hopeful that the President and the FEA will halt these practices in the interest of fuel conservation. In addition, I have discussed this problem with a number of representatives from major oil companies to relate my concerns to them about this matter.

"On February 28, 1975 I wrote to FEA Administrator Frank Zarb asking a series of questions about actions taken to insure that consumers were not paying unjustified fuel increases. I also sought information about potential conflict of interest stemming from FEA employees ^{of} ~~past~~ ^{the} relationships with energy industries. Nearly two months and two dozen telephone calls later I ^{finally} received much of the information requested and a letter from Mr. Zarb.

"We are now reviewing this information. Many serious questions have yet to be answered. Many serious questions arise from the information received. Within the next week, after consultation with a number of Congressional Committees who have initiated similar investigations, we hope to make a decision about the manner in which we will seek additional information.

"On April 23 I met with the Assistant Administrator of the FEA for Regulatory Programs. We discussed a variety of energy matters and plan to continue these discussions in the near future.