



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

NOVEMBER 20, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BISHOP OPPOSES FLAWED ENERGY BILL

Effort Contains Liability Immunity for Makers of MTBE

Washington, DC—Congressman Tim Bishop voted against HR 6, the Energy Bill which passed the House of Representatives on Tuesday night by a vote of 246-180. Bishop opposed the bill because it contained liability immunity for the makers of MtBE and does nothing to conserve energy. The one positive provision he cited was a last-minute insertion to allow continued use of the Cross Sound Cable. Estimates on the bill's costs vary from \$23-100 billion; the myriad of special interest provisions led Senator John McCain to call the bill "Leave No Lobbyist Behind."

"This is an energy bill in name only," Bishop said. "It provides immunity to the makers of MtBE, weakens major environmental laws like the Clean Air Act, and does all that while managing to not conserve a single gallon of gas or make any attempt to improve our energy independence from foreign oil."

MtBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether), has been cited both locally and nationwide as a defective product that has resulted in massive pollution. Locally, East Hampton and Southampton were exploring lawsuits against the makers of the product following spills that have polluted groundwater, including spills in North Sea, Hampton Bays and Flanders. Nationally, cleanup costs have been estimated at \$29 billion from at least 150,000 contaminated sites.

The bill provides a special liability waiver for MtBE producers who face lawsuits from states and localities for polluting their water supplies, thereby shifting cleanup costs to taxpayers. The bill makes this immunity retroactive to September 5, which would nullify several existing lawsuits.

Not only does the bill give MtBe makers special favors, but it also provides them with \$2 billion in 'transition costs' to stop making the defective product. One of the main reasons cited for these provisions is many MtBE manufacturers are located in Texas, and were protected by powerful House Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

"It seems that Tom DeLay put the special interests of Texan polluters above the interests of the American people," Bishop said.

Bishop was pleased by a last-minute provision that allows for continued use of the Cross Sound Cable. The Cable was activated on August 14 during the blackout, it provides power to nearly 300,000 Long Island homes.

"The Cross Sound Cable is vital to the energy needs of Long Island, and I am pleased that it will continue to operate and provide energy to our communities," Bishop said. "However, adding one bright spot to this deeply flawed bill is not enough."

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