

News release — from the office of

Congressman Harley O. Staggers

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file

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WASHINGTON- Congressman Harley Staggers of West Virginia said today that the Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act, passed by the House of Representatives Wednesday "offers the nation a strong and sensible program to deal with fuel and heating oil shortages."

The wide-ranging bill directs the President to put into effect within 25 days of enactment a mandatory allocation program which would include crude oil, fuel oil, gasoline, kerosene, jet fuel, home heating oil, propane, butane, lubricating oil and diesel fuel.

"While giving the President considerable flexibility in determining allocation priorities," Staggers pointed out, "the bill requires that fuel be especially provided for public health and safety, national defense, maintenance of public services, agriculture and certain manufacturing operations."

The Staggers bill also seeks to prevent U.S. petroleum products from being shipped to other nations while this country faces shortages and provides that industries that depend on natural gas for manufacturing such as chemical and glass plants be allowed to substitute propane when necessary to maintain production.

The bill also prohibits the major oil companies from withholding gasoline from independent service stations and seeks to prevent inequities such as occurred under the President's Phase 4 program when station owners were forced to bear the entire burden of a price increase.

Pointing to the "very real possibility of a serious shortage of home heating oil this winter," Staggers steadfastly defended the bill during 6 hours of debate in the House.

"Our limited energy supplies must be allocated where they are most needed and must not be squandered in other areas," he told his colleagues.

(more)

After defeating repeated attempts by representatives from oil producing states to weaken the bill, the House approved the Staggers bill by a vote of 337 to 72 .

Staggers will now lead selected House members into conference with the Senate to iron-out differences between this measure and a similar Senate-passed bill. The final version then goes to the President for his signature or veto.

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