

HARLEY O. STAGGERS
2D DISTRICT, WEST VIRGINIA

HOME ADDRESS:
KEYSER, WEST VIRGINIA

CHAIRMAN:
COMMITTEE ON
INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN
COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 29, 1974

Mr. Richard Cartwright Austin
1312 Virginia Street, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Dear Mr. Austin:

This will acknowledge your letter of recent date. I appreciate your writing me.

It is good to have the benefit of your views with reference to the "energy crisis", and I certainly share your concern with the effect of this crisis on our Nation's economic situation. In an effort to be helpful, Congress is trying to look into every facet of the fuel problem to obtain the facts. I feel sure something favorable will be worked out.

You and yours may depend on my continued interest and efforts in seeing that equitable legislation is passed toward the best interest of the majority of consumers.

Again, thanking you for writing and with every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

HARLEY O. STAGGERS

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Richard Cartwright Austin
1312 Virginia St. East
Charleston, W.Va. 25301
January 15, 1974

Hon. Harley Staggers
House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Staggers,

It is critically important that the poorly conceived "Emergency Energy Act" be recommitted to conference committee with instructions to 1) reenstate excess profits tax provisions, 2) delete the delay for implementation of auto emission standards, 3) delete the removal of EPA authority over urban transportation problems, and 4) delete the exemption to air pollution standards relative to the mandatory conversion of certain power plants to coal.

During the past month it has become increasingly clear that a substantial portion of the 'energy crisis' is directly attributable to contrived shortages and economic and political power plays by the major energy companies in an effort to increase profits and to frustrate those public policies which they find inconvenient. For congress to reward these companies for their monopolistic conspiracy would be a complete abandonment of the public trust. Instead, Congress should strengthen the anti-trust laws to facilitate the prompt dismemberment of these companies -- particularly of their vertical integration. America has enough governmental troubles without falling under the rule of energy monopolies.

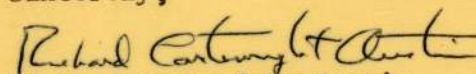
For the short-term "emergency" situation, excess profits provisions are obviously critical to prevent the most direct windfall to the conspirators. It is equally important that emergency legislation do as little as possible to disrupt established public policies designed to make our nation, and particularly our cities, healthy places to live. The impact of auto pollution standards upon energy consumption is so minor and the public benefits so great that it is ridiculous to slow the implementation of these standards. And the provisions restraining the authority of EPA, provisions which would increase energy consumption, obviously have no place in the bill.

West Virginia would certainly benefit economically from the reconversion of certain electric power plants to coal as the bill provides for. But any reconversion which involves temporary suspension of air pollution standards will neither meet the energy crisis nor provide the incentive for an orderly expansion of mining -- particularly of underground mining which is so heavily concentrated in W.Va. In the very short term, authority to reconvert will have no impact on the energy situation at all because coal supplies will not be expanded that rapidly. A five-year exemption from air-pollution standards, as contemplated in the present text of the bill, is also not sufficient incentive to open new mines. Most mines started today would take at least two years to reach production and then have only three years remaining to sell their product under the exemption. Who would invest in such an enterprise?

The conversions mandated by the bill should be permanent and should not involve suspensions of air pollution standards. There are, particularly in West Virginia, abundant supplies of low sulphur coal which can be utilized to meet these standards. And there need to be increased incentives to develop the technologies which may make it possible to use higher-sulphur coals. The bill should, therefore, 1) provide the administration with authority to order mandatory conversions on a timetable which will not ~~disrupt~~ the implementation of air pollution standards, 2) provide for a continuing system for allocation of low sulphur fuels to support these conversions and these standards, and 3) provide further mandatory timetables for the implementation of best-available technologies for pollution control in coal-burning power plants and plants scheduled for conversion so that these plants can be prepared to utilize coal without environmental damage. Such a program would insure a permanently growing market for coal and would stimulate investment in the new mines necessary to meet the demand.

We can live with temporary inconveniences, longer lines at gas stations, even rationing. We cannot live with a government which comes under the domination of our newest breed of economic royalists, nor with a rape of our pocketbooks in order to fatten Exxon et al.

Sincerely,


Richard Cartwright Austin