

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 31, 1974**

Mrs. Dillon S. Propst  
Moyers  
West Virginia 26813

Dear Mrs. Propst:

This will acknowledge your letter of recent date together with the enclosure. I deeply appreciate your writing me.

From your communication, I have noted with much interest your comments concerning the "energy crisis", and I certainly share your concern with the effect of this crisis on our Nation's economic situation.

As you no doubt know, last week President Nixon recommended to the Senate that the energy bill not be passed and unfortunately the Senate voted accordingly. The House and Senate Conferees have scheduled further meetings. It is my sincere hope that something favorable will work out. I know how important this is to West Virginia and the Nation.

Again, thank you so much for writing. Your very gracious comments in my behalf are deeply appreciated. It is my sincere hope and prayer I shall continue to merit your good words, confidence and support. The friendship of you and yours has meant so much through all the years.

With very best wishes and kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

HARLEY O. STAGGERS

Jan. 19, 1974

Hon. Harley Staggers  
Washington, D.C.

JAN 22 1974

Dear Mr. Staggers:

It is unfair to write to complain and I have never written to give you praise for the faithful and true representation you have given us all through the past years.

I believe with all my heart you are a just and conscientious representative, and I truly want to thank you for your years of service to us.

I am a concerned ~~and~~ uninformed citizen in regard to the energy crisis. Especially the gasoline crisis. We have a small business and sell gasoline. I want to do what is right and am trying to do as the President asks but then I see

articles like the one enclosed and I don't know what to think or do.

I hope that big business has not taken over so much that all our little businesses will be wiped out.

Thanks for listening to me. Please keep information coming our way. I'm going to try to read and study more to be better informed so that I might be a better citizen of our great country.

May God guide and lead you, as I feel He has in the past, in your service to us and our nation.

Sincerely yours,  
Mrs. Dillon Propst

Mrs. Dillon S. Propst  
(Virginia)

Moyers, W. Va. 26813

# Independent Oil Well Owner Is Going Broke

HUNTINGTON, W. Va. (AP) — Earl Bevins owns several oil wells and because of the energy crisis, everyone thinks he's getting rich. But he says he's going broke.

Although the Cost of Living Council has granted a 23 per cent increase in the price of domestic crude and the major oil companies have bid for Middle East oil, Bevins said he'd be more than happy to sell his wells and get out of the business.

"The public is being misled in the case of us independent crude oil producers," he said as he pulled out a wad of receipts. "The price of gasoline is going out of sight and I read in the newspapers that Ashland Oil bid \$17.40 a barrel in Iran but all I get for my oil is \$3.80 a barrel.

"What I want to know," said the tall, middle-aged man, "is why they'll pay the Arabs \$17 and me \$3.80? There's something wrong here somewhere."

Bevins said he owns several wells in Eastern Kentucky and has a part interest in several others in West Virginia. He said there's plenty of untapped oil in the area and enough in the nation to alleviate the energy crisis in a few months, if the producers could afford to bring it out of the ground.

"There's about 80 of us independent producers in this area," he said, "and we're in a closed market. Ashland Oil has the only large refinery in this area and they set the price. If anybody's getting rich these days it's the major oil companies, not

us independent producers."

An Ashland Oil spokesman said the Cost of Living Council regulates the price of crude oil. But he added that, as of last Friday, Ashland was given permission to pay \$10 a barrel for new and stripper oil developed domestically and indicated that could serve as an incentive for independent crude oil producers.

"Nobody's drilling anymore," Bevins said. "In fact, I'm selling my drilling equipment. Since Congress cut the depletion allowance five or six years ago, the investment capital for such high-risk ventures has been drying up while drilling costs continue to go up almost daily."

Bevins said the price of crude oil in this country has not kept pace with foreign prices or with

inflationary price and cost hikes affecting his business and living expenses.

"I sold Eastern Kentucky oil in January of 1973 for \$3.20 a barrel," he said, "and in the past year I've gotten an increase of 60 cents a barrel while the public daily sees news stories of crude oil prices rising by leaps and bounds. Who is the recipient of this price increase?"

Bevins added: "If you know somebody who wants some oil wells, I'll be glad to sell them some."