

The Speaker's Rooms
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

December 12, 1975

The Honorable Harley O. Staggers
Chairman
Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 1975 in which you request that H.R. 9464, the natural gas emergency bill, be considered under Suspension of the Rules.

I certainly appreciate the circumstances surrounding your request. However, as it has been a well established policy to only consider legislation under this procedure which is relatively noncontroversial, and as it is known that there are a substantial number of Members who feel very strongly that the House should be able to consider this matter in the fullest possible context, it does not seem appropriate to consider this bill under the Suspension of the Rules procedure.

Accordingly, in order for the House to act on the legislation prior to the end of the Session, I respectfully request that you file the committee report and take the bill to the Committee on Rules on Tuesday, December 16, 1975, as previously scheduled. I am sure that the Committee will give the issues raised in your letter due consideration in their deliberations.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,


The Speaker

CA/jj

HARLEY O. STAGGERS, W. VA., CHAIRMAN

TORBERT H. MACDONALD, MASS.
JOHN E. MOSS, CALIF.
JOHN D. DINGELL, MICH.
PAUL G. ROGERS, FLA.
LIONEL VAN DEERLIN, CALIF.
FRED B. ROONEY, PA.
JOHN M. MURPHY, N.Y.
DAVID E. SATTERFIELD III, VA.
BROCK ADAMS, WASH.
W. S. (BILL) STUCKEY, JR., GA.
BOB ECKHARDT, TEX.
RICHARDSON PREYER, N.C.
JAMES W. SYMINGTON, MO.
CHARLES J. CARNEY, OHIO
RALPH H. METCALFE, ILL.
GOODLOE E. BYRON, MD.
JAMES H. SCHEUER, N.Y.
RICHARD L. OTTINGER, N.Y.
HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIF.
ROBERT (BOB) KRUEGER, TEX.
TIMOTHY E. WIRTH, COLO.
PHILIP R. SHARP, IND.
WILLIAM M. BRODHEAD, MICH.
W. G. (BILL) HEFNER, N.C.
JAMES J. FLORIO, N.J.
ANTHONY TOBY MOFFETT, CONN.
JIM SANTINI, NEV.
ANDREW MAGUIRE, N.J.

W. E. WILLIAMSON, CLERK

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce
Room 2125, Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 12, 1975

The Honorable
Carl Albert
Speaker, United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

This is to respectfully request that you recognize me, at such time as you may deem appropriate next week, to suspend the rules to bring up H. R. 9464. It is a strong consensus of the Chairman and the Subcommittee Chairmen of our Committee that such procedure would be the most expeditious and practical way to consider the bill.

We have come to these conclusions from the following considerations:

- (1) The bill in its present form is relatively noncontroversial. It presents the simple question of whether or not to afford a more flexible system for the remainder of the winter to flow excess intrastate gas at intrastate prices through interstate lines to areas throughout the country where shortages exist. (If that were the only question presented, with the advocacy of the Committee and support of the Leadership, a two-thirds vote could be obtained.)

It is felt that the bill is, therefore, a proper candidate for the suspension calendar. Indeed the only real controversy which attends this legislation relates to the efforts of some to use this bill as a vehicle for preempting the normal legislative process.

- (2) There is little time to complete action on this narrowly focused emergency measure in the House and in the Senate before the recess, and to seek a rule would introduce far ranging questions of policy, each of which would constitute an impediment to passage before the recess.

December 12, 1975

- (3) The bill was designed as a stopgap measure for the winter, and the Subcommittee has clearly declared its purpose to proceed with dispatch to consider the broader question of gas pricing policy. Therefore, it would be quite appropriate to proceed under the suspension of the rules procedure in order to accomplish the specific goal of the legislation.
- (4) To proceed under a rule could be most divisive. If we were to move to a broader issue of policy than that addressed by the bill (relief to distressed pipelines and gas users during the winter), we would be dealing with an energy issue as complex as that which was involved in H. R. 7014 and S. 622, without complete development of the facts in hearings and consideration of policy in mark-up.
- (5) The crowded condition of the calendar during the last days of this session is not conducive to deliberate consideration of legislation, and it is certainly not the atmosphere in which important policy determinations should be made on the Floor without any Committee guidance.

It seems inappropriate to go before the Rules Committee at this time to seek a rule on H. R. 9464.

I would, therefore, respectfully urge consideration of this bill under suspension and its prompt passage.

Sincerely yours,

HARLEY O. STAGGERS
Chairman

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

December 12, 1975

Honorable Carl Albert
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

This is to request that you recognize me, at such time as you may deem appropriate next week, to suspend the rules to bring up H. R. 9464. It is a strong consensus of the Chairman and the Subcommittee Chairmen of our Committee that such procedure would be the most expeditious and practical way to consider the bill. We have come to these conclusions from the following considerations:

- (1) The bill in its present form is relatively non-controversial. It presents the simple question of whether or not to afford a more flexible system for the remainder of the winter to flow excess intrastate gas at intrastate prices through interstate lines to areas throughout the country where shortages exist. ~~[It is believed that]~~ If that were the only question presented, with the advocacy of the Committee and support of the leadership, a two-thirds vote could be obtained.]

- (2) There is little time to complete action on this bill in the House and in the Senate before the recess, and to seek a rule would introduce far-ranging questions of policy, each of which would constitute an impediment to passage before the recess.

narrowly focused
emergency
measure

I believe that the bill is, therefore, a proper candidate for the suspension calendar. Indeed the only real controversy which attends this legislation relates to efforts to use this bill as a vehicle for pre-empting the normal legislative process.

Some

to bring before the House

(3) The bill was designed as a stopgap measure for the winter, and the Subcommittee has clearly declared its purpose to proceed with dispatch to consider the broader question of gas pricing policy. Therefore, it would be quite appropriate to proceed under the suspension of the rules procedure in order to accomplish the specific goal of the legislation.

(4) To proceed under a rule could be most divisive. If we were to move to a broader issue of policy than that addressed by the bill (relief to distressed pipelines and gas users during the winter), we would be dealing with an energy issue as complex as that which was involved in H. R. 7014 and S. 622 with most incomplete development of the facts in hearings and consideration of policy in mark-up.

(5) The crowded condition of the calendar during the last days of this session, and the desires of the members to go home, is not conducive, in the best circumstances, to deliberate consideration of legislation, and it is certainly not the atmosphere in which important policy determinations should be made on the floor without any Committee guidance.

For these reasons, I have decided not to seek a rule on H. R. 9464 in any event. But, though it does now appear on the basis of facts which have developed since the hearing that a great quantity of gas has been "found" to supply the market (when it can draw three times the interstate rate under special FPC procedures) out of an abundance of caution, I would urge expedited consideration of this bill under suspension and its prompt passage.

Sincerely,

Harley O. Staggers
Chairman

This position is further fortified by recent developments indicating that demand for natural gas this winter will be substantially less than originally projected and inventories of natural gas and availability of alternative fuels are sufficient to meet the demand. Therefore, in my opinion, the fears of an energy emergency are unfounded. As a result, the factual basis of the emergency is removed.

deserving to be more fully considered

It seems to me that it is inappropriate to

without

go before the Rules Committee at this time to

in order to meet and emergency