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

*file*  
January 30, 1976

Dear Colleague:

Next Tuesday the House will be asked to vote on H.Res. 937, a Rule which pertains to House consideration of the emergency natural gas bill, H.R. 9464. I respectfully ask your support in defeating this Rule.

Other colleagues have argued against deregulation on substantive grounds. I do not propose to repeat their statements, although I find them compelling. Still others have told you that this Rule will throw the House into turmoil, for it will require prolonged debate of highly complex questions without the benefit of Committee analysis or recommendation. I share the belief that so fundamental and significant a change in the law should not be effected in this manner. But this letter asks that you vote against this Rule because it offends fundamental principles of fairness and should be rejected by Members of good conscience without regard to their views of the substantive issues involved or party affiliation.

The Rule itself would allocate debate as follows: one hour to the Member recognized by the Speaker for the purpose of calling up the bill; one hour for the minority; and, one additional hour, the entirety of which is to be controlled by Mr. Krueger. At the very least, therefore, those who support the Krueger amendment are to control two of the three hours available for debate. Moreover, the Rule apparently leaves open the potential that the Speaker might choose to recognize for the purpose of calling up the bill a Member of the Committee similarly aligned with those who favor Mr. Krueger's amendment.

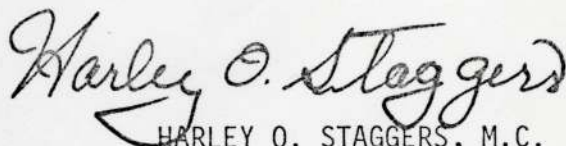
Consider also the allocation of debate time for consideration of this extraordinary Rule. As I understand it, the minority, which favors the Rule, is to have one half of the hour; Mr. Young of Texas, who also favors the Rule, is to have fifteen minutes; and Mr. Bolling, who opposes it, is to have fifteen minutes. In other words, those who would urge you to vote against the Rule are allocated only one quarter of the time to do so.

It is clear to me that the Rules Committee does not intend to permit a fair and open debate on this subject. The procedures simply preclude that opportunity. As Chairman Madden noted when this rule was approved over his objection, there has never been anything like this procedure in his twenty odd years on the Rules Committee--it "stinks right up to high heaven." I would like to associate myself with Chairman Madden's remarks. And I hope that you are equally shocked by this process.

I have asked the Rules Committee to grant a proper rule for the consideration of H.R. 9464: a rule which is truly "open" and one which does not waive points of order to permit debate to be entangled in the deregulation controversy.

I would agree that long term natural gas pricing policies require change. The Committee's Energy and Power Subcommittee is scheduled to begin markup of legislation this next week on proposals which seek to restructure these policies including those which seek deregulation as the solution to our problems. I will commit my full energies to bringing a legislative product to the Floor for consideration of the full House in this session of the Congress. If Mr. Krueger is unsuccessful in the Committee, he can then offer his proposal to the House when that legislation comes to the Floor without the need for special purpose rules.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harley O. Stagggers". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

HARLEY O. STAGGERS, M.C.  
CHAIRMAN

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