

LES AUCOIN  
1ST DISTRICT, OREGON



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

May 1, 1980

Dear Colleague:

We have introduced comprehensive legislation to encourage a grass roots approach to energy conservation. The bill—The Community Energy Conservation Act—builds on legislation introduced separately last session by both of us. This new consolidated bill has been introduced on the Senate side by Senators Tsongas, Williams, Jackson and Magnuson.

It may seem unusual to propose a new program at a time when every effort is being made to scale back programs and balance the budget. The reason we have chosen to pursue this program is that we are absolutely convinced it will pay long term dividends to our economy by helping to reduce our dangerous, inflationary dependence on foreign oil. How? Through the barely tapped potential of conservation.

The federal government now has a two level approach to energy conservation. On the one level, it has issued a battery of standards and regulations to reduce energy consumed in public buildings, private residences and for transportation. On the other, the government has formulated new programs to make grants and loans available to individuals to encourage conservation and the use of alternative energy resources.

Both approaches are needed. But both have their weaknesses. In mandating conservation, the government promulgates standards without the participation of people who will be subjected to them. Resistance is high. And the standards never seem to account adequately for differences in geography and climate.

The weakness with programs aimed at encouraging conservation by individuals is that they operate independently from other local and federal efforts. There is no opportunity to take a comprehensive approach.

The Community Energy Conservation Act would take a different tack by encouraging local governments to create their own conservation efforts. The Act is incentive-oriented, comprehensive and flexible, intended to encourage local governments to undertake innovative programs based on community consensus.

Ultimately, a grass roots effort is the only successful way to make conservation a reality. Such local grass roots efforts can build on the principle that conservation is everyone's responsibility. When one household wastes energy, it costs the community because everyone pays the price through higher utility rates for creating new energy sources.

The Community Energy Conservation Act has three major provisions. The central provision of the bill would build on HUD's Community Development Block Grant program by providing grants to local governments for energy conservation planning and programs. The Act also creates a second program modeled after the Urban Development Action Grant program. It would provide seed money through the Department of Energy to encourage private and public investment in alternative energy sources such as solid waste heat recovery and geothermal energy systems. Finally, the bill would consolidate a variety of state energy programs along the lines of the Energy Management Partnership Act proposed by the Administration.

The price for this new program: \$172 million, slightly more than the proposed budget for the Administration's EMPA program.

A section by section summary of the bill can be found on page H2875 of the RECORD of April 23. If you have questions or would like to co-sponsor, please contact David Knowles at x50855.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

  
ED MARKEY  
Member of Congress

  
LES AuCOIN  
Member of Congress