



815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

JOHN J. SWENEY  
PRESIDENT

RICHARD L. TRUSKA  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON  
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT!**

(202) 637-8000

July 31, 2001

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the AFL-CIO to express our views on several matters addressed by H.R. 4, the "Securing America's Future Energy Act of 2001." We believe that responsible and responsive action to address the nation's short run and long term energy needs is long overdue. The recent situation in California - where electricity shortages were compounded by manipulation and price gouging - are pointed reminders that it is consumers who ultimately pay the price for the lack of a sound energy policy. And it is working families whose interests and needs must be paramount in any legislation Congress enacts to address short term and long range energy needs.

As drafted, H.R. 4 would phase out the current 4.3 cents motor fuel excise tax on railroads (see Division C, Title I, section 3115). We believe that repealing this surcharge would be ill advised. Repealing the fuel surcharge on railroads will provide no meaningful improvements in the industry. With all of the challenges facing the rail industry and its employees, now is not the time for Congress to give the nation's railroads a multi-million dollar tax rollback. Therefore, we urge you to support an amendment to strike the 4.3 cents phase-out in the energy package, and to insist that such an amendment be made in order.

The AFL-CIO supports the continued development of clean coal technologies and the use of tax credits that encourage the installation of advanced coal technologies (see Division E of H.R. 4). The United States is conservatively estimated to have a 250 year supply of known coal reserves. Since the passage of the 1970 Clean Air Act, the use of coal has increased three-fold, while emissions from the use of coal in our nation's utilities has been reduced by a third. The development and installation of clean coal technologies will increase the efficiency of coal-fired generation, continue the trend of reduced emissions, and continue to provide us with a low-cost affordable supply of energy.

The AFL-CIO will be monitoring the amendments that are made in order to Division E. As appropriate, we may comment further upon any such amendments during House deliberation of the measure or during the Senate's consideration. We also believe it is critical that the legislation ensure consultation with unions representing mining industry employees during any assessments the Secretary of Energy is required to undertake. Section 5004, which identifies the entities with which the Secretary must consult for certain purposes, should be clarified to make this requirement explicit.

The AFL-CIO opposes the Boehlert-Markey amendment that would require unreasonable and impractical increases in the fuel efficiency (CAFE) standards for cars and/or light trucks. Because of their discriminatory impact on domestic production, such proposals could have a serious, negative effect on U.S. production and employment. The AFL-CIO believes that there are better ways to achieve significant fuel savings that would not jeopardize the jobs of thousands of workers.

Division F, Title V of H.R. 4 provides for establishing and implementing a competitive oil and gas leasing program "that will result in an environmentally sound program for the exploration, development, and production of the oil and gas resources of the Coastal Plain" (the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)). The AFL-CIO has long supported the development of appropriate energy sources to meet the needs of the nation and the concerns of consumers, as long as the environment is protected. At our 1993 Convention, delegates adopted a resolution that, in part, called on the country to "explore the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge for oil with safeguards to protect the environment." The entire policy expressed in the 1993 AFL-CIO Convention resolution on energy remains in effect (copy attached).

We appreciate your consideration of the AFL-CIO's views on H.R. 4.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION

Enclosure: 1993 AFL-CIO Convention Resolution